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Surviving Nixon: The Politicization of Domestic and Foreign Policy, 1969-1974

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Surviving Nixon: The Politicization of Domestic and Foreign Policy, 1969-1974

By

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Abstract

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This dissertation examines politicization in domestic and foreign policy making, using approaches that are largely quantitative, including survival analysis and text-as-data methods, and the Nixon administration (1969-1974) as its central case. Politicization – the placement of political loyalists into the executive bureaucracy and the use of political criteria or pressures to retain them – is an important way modern presidents have attempted to control an increasingly large and complex institutional environment. Studies of presidential politicization have only in recent years become data-driven, supported by a growing number of datasets on the executive branch. This dissertation adds to that growth, first, by assembling a previously unavailable dataset on tenure for Nixon officials and advisors, including covariates for individual characteristics and the agencies in which they serve. Second, it assembles a unique corpus of documents from the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series, programmatically pre-processing them to make them available for computational analysis.

Using these tenure and textual data, this study finds that politicization, while an important dimension of official and advisor control under Nixon, is *contingent* and conditioned on several factors. Among these are the informational resources available to an official or advisor, which stem from characteristics of the agency in which she serves. Such characteristics include the agency's robustness, its number of high-competence positions, and how specialized its policy product is. A second key factor, anticipated by the long literature on the "two presidencies," is the domain of policy (domestic or foreign) an official is responsible for. In domestic policy, robust agencies with access to private, policy-relevant information tend to be politicized on the basis of conventional left-right ideology, while coordinating agencies are not. In foreign policy, left-right ideology is deployed when officials differ from the President over preferred policy instruments; otherwise, such "instrumental" preferences are more influential than left-right ideology.

for my parents

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Introduction: Understanding politicization by studying Nixon

This dissertation examines patterns of politicization in presidential domestic and foreign policy making, using approaches that are largely quantitative, including survival analysis and text-as-data methods, and the Nixon administration as its central case. Politicization – the placement of political loyalists into the executive bureaucracy and the use of political criteria or pressures to retain them – is an important way modern presidents have attempted to control an increasingly large and complex institutional environment. Studies of politicization have only recently become data-driven, with work supported by a growing number of datasets on the executive branch. This dissertation adds to that growth, first, by putting together a previously unavailable, granular dataset on tenure for Nixon officials and advisors, including covariates for individual characteristics and the agencies in which they serve. Second, it assembles a unique corpus of documents from the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series, programmatically pre-processing them to make them available for computational analysis.

Unlike much of the research on presidential politicization, which examines appointment, this study looks at *retention* of officials and advisors as a way to understand it. Moreover, while most studies emphasize politicization in domestic policy, here we examine politicization in both domestic (Chapters 2 and 3) and foreign policy (Chapter 4). Bridging policy domains presents a unique challenge. The left-right spectrum does not capture relevant belief distinctions among foreign-policy makers. Instead of trying to measure an official's beliefs along conventional ideological lines, we will indirectly capture her underlying belief by focusing on one of its byproduct, her preference over *policy instruments*, which will be assessed using a text-as-data methodology.

Why study politicization?

The subject of politicization is, in accounts of the modern presidency, evergreen. It invokes important dimensions of presidential authority – the power to appoint, delegate and retain – and evokes consternation about the abuse of that authority. Early studies of the post-war presidency, in what Burke calls the managerial traditions,[1] often held up politicization as a problematic tendency to contain, either with the right administrative culture, an ethos of neutral competence, or proper organization: competitive advisory bodies, for example, managed by an apolitical umpire or honest broker. Later institutional studies were more agnostic. They viewed politicization as the rational, maybe inevitable, adaptation to the growth and institutionalization of the presidency. More recent studies in this vein, many informed by game theory (especially games of strategic information, which we review next chapter), have sought to model politicization as a phenomenon that is rational yet contingent. Patterns of politicization come from, among other sources, the type of policy agencies generate, or the balance of power between the president and Congress.

At the heart of concerns about presidential politicization lies a double-edged danger. On the one hand, politicization threatens to aggrandize executive authority. It

[1] John P. Burke, *The Institutional Presidency: Organizing and Managing the White House from FDR to Clinton*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).

raises the image of an overreaching, imperial presidency that cannot be checked as the framers of the U.S. Constitution intended. On the other it threatens the misuse of that power. Substituting neutrally-competent officials for political loyalists, de-professionalizing the bureaucracy more broadly, can lead to policy development that is ill-informed, implementation that lacks proper oversight, executive agencies that are poorly managed, and in the worst-case scenarios, irrational, even dangerous, presidential policy responses.[2]

Why study Nixon?

Studies of Nixon emphasize this double danger. All but the most sympathetic authors depict Nixon as loyalty-obsessed and deeply involved in politicizing the policy-making environment. Many see the offensive against enemies that boiled over into Watergate, the back-channeling of information and marginalization of cabinet secretaries, and misadventures such as the U.S. involvement in Cambodia, as consequences of the echo chamber created by Nixon and his closest aides. In Nixon we see how potentially damaging politicization can be. In fact, these vicissitudes of the Nixon years are at times considered so extreme as to make the Nixon case *sui generis* – an outlier with limited general relevance. There are, however, three important reasons to still draw on the Nixon administration to help understand politicization.

1. Nixon is a pivotal case.

First-hand accounts and media-driven narratives have had perhaps a stronger effect on the Nixon presidency than any other, generating cottage industries devoted to revealing the president's excesses, lionizing those who resisted him, or claiming credit for Nixon's often innovative domestic and foreign policies. In presidential studies the Nixon presidency has had a similar outsize influence. It is a *pivotal* case: for managerial scholars, for example, it provided a high-profile lesson on the risks of personality and overreach, raising an even louder call for organizational solutions. For institutionalist scholars, both early and more contemporary, Nixon was the inaugurating case of the tendency to politicize that contemporary presidents have held to.[3]

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[2] There is a substantial body of literature that connects politicization with poor policy outcomes and agency performance; see, e.g. John B. Gilmour and David E. Lewis, "Political Appointees and the Competence of Federal Program Management," *American Politics Research* 34, no. 1 (2006); Hugh Heclo, "The Office of Management and Budget and the Presidency: The Problem of Neutral Competence," *The Public Interest* 38, no. Winter (1975); Hugh Heclo, *A Government of Strangers: Executive Politics in Washington* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1977).

[3] Hult and Walcott (2004) describe the Nixon years as a "tipping point" separating the early from the late postwar presidencies. Numerical growth of the EOP is less a factor than the proliferation of responsibilities for aides, advisors and officials is, as well as the concentration of activity in the White House Office. Karen Marie Hult and Charles Eliot Walcott, *Empowering the White House: Governance under Nixon, Ford, and Carter*, Studies in government and public policy, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004).

It is important to submit these claims to statistical testing. After all, what histories and qualitative depictions tell us, and what practitioners claim at the time or later recall, may not be supported by the data. Luckily, because of post-Nixon legislation meant to increase executive-branch transparency and accountability, there are reliable, quality data out there. These include data on tenure, pay, job category and campaign contributions, from which we get spatial ideology scores used to assess politicization. This study draws on these, in part to address claims about politicization in the Nixon administration specifically, providing a data-supported counterpoint to mainstream and qualitative depictions.

2. Nixon is a crucial case

Nixon is important for another reason. If we assume that Nixon is an exemplary case of politicization – if Nixon was deeply involved in politicizing the bureaucracy and policy process – then evidence of non-politicization, conditions under which he did not or could not politicize, are of special interest. Nixon is, to use Gerring's term, a *crucial case*. If we see evidence that impersonal forces or institutional mechanisms provided a bulwark against politicization, despite strong presidential pressures for it, we can assume the causal logic linking such forces or mechanisms to outcomes is strong. Conclusions drawn from a crucial case in this way are of general relevance. [4]

This study will show that Nixon – even Nixon – was constrained by institutional conditions. The most important of these are the distribution of informational resources in the executive branch, what I call *agency robustness*, the degree of policy specialization among officials, and the level of competence of their agency or policy unit. Importantly, *policy domain* – whether the subject of deliberation is domestic or foreign policy – has a profound impact on patterns of politicization. Foreign policy is *not* exempt from politicizing pressure, but operates on a different logic, on what we may call *policy-constrained belief*, and not only on ideology in the conventional (left-right) sense.

3. Nixon is a relevant case

Finally, recent presidencies, including the Obama and Trump administrations, point to a further strengthening of executive authority, a gradual isolation of the White House, and a growing insulation of the executive from legislative and judicial oversight. The parallels with the Nixon period have not been lost on observers in media and government. We have seen former Nixon officials return to the public eye, for example, and attempts to use history to build the case for congressional push-back, and even impeachment.[5]

Nathan argues that politicization arose in part to manage these proliferating agendas and portfolios among a growing set of coordinating bodies: Richard P. Nathan, *The Plot That Failed: Nixon and the Administrative Presidency* (New York: Wiley, 1975).

[4] John Gerring, *Social Science Methodology: A Criterial Framework* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); John Gerring, "Is There a (Viable) Crucial-Case Method?," *Comparative Political Studies* 40, no. 3 (2007).

[5] Examples abound: Laura M. Holson, "Remember John Dean of Watergate Fame? He's Back in the Spotlight," *The New York Times*, Aug. 20, 2018; Tom Brokaw, "What Trump

Such argument by analogy is undoubtedly controversial and rightfully so; nonetheless, given the trajectory of executive power in the current era of political volatility and extreme polarization, the Nixon presidency, and patterns of politicization that took hold from January 21, 1969 to August 9, 1974, are vitally important to understand.

Plan of this dissertation

Chapter 1 begins with a broad examination of three bodies of scholarly literature that relate to presidential politicization. The first comprises works in the managerial tradition, and includes the most important early works on the post-war presidency. The second is institutionalist analysis, which discarded much of the normative framing of earlier work, and viewed politicization largely as rational adaptation. The third is an "adjacent" literature, which come from game theory work in micro- and organizational economics; these studies use *strategic information* models, some of which have been ported into political science and even contemporary presidential studies. They provide a robust theoretical framework for understanding politicization, including conditions under which the president may choose *against* ideological allies.

Chapters 2 and 3 subject theoretical claims to empirical testing, using tenure data on Nixon-era officials and advisors in the Executive Office of the President (EOP). Chapter 2 details how data were collected and summarizes them. It separates them into two groups. Core theoretical variables include agency robustness, policy specialization, competence, and policy domain. These are followed by individual-level covariates – age/experience, salary level, civil service careerism, and so forth – that serve as controls. Chapter 2 also introduces the statistical methodology, Cox proportional hazards models, that is further developed in the subsequent chapter. Chapter 3 provides detailed non-parametric results as well as those for semi-parametric Cox regression. The most important of these are interactions among or theory variables, which clearly demonstrate the *contingent nature* of Nixon's politicization strategy.

Chapter 4 extends a similar logic into the domain of foreign policy. It pivots away from survival models to text-as-data methods, including *latent Dirichlet allocation* and the *structural topic model*. The data here are a corpus of documents taken from the State Department's *Foreign Relations of the United States*, which is pre-processed using natural language techniques. The results are estimated topics that are largely representative of *policy instruments* – that is, the specific policy choices, such as unilateral military intervention, collective security, negotiation or cultural diplomacy, used to address trouble areas and advance the U.S. interest in foreign affairs. I argue that an official's "menu" of policy instruments, her preference over such policy means, reflects her underlying beliefs. Like left-right ideology, this latent, *policy-constrained belief* serves to discriminate officials from each other and from the president, and serves as an important focus of politicization in foreign policy.

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and Nixon Share," *The New York Times*, March 7, 2019; David Friend, "'It Turned Out Badly For Nixon': As Mueller Prepares for His Congressional Star Turn, Echoes of Another Long-Running TV Tragicomedy," *Vanity Fair*, July 22, 2019. On Nixon Vice-President Spiro Agnew, see: Rachel Maddow and Michael Yarvitz, *Bag Man*, podcast audio, 2018, https://www.msnbc.com/bagman.

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I would also like to extend thanks to a second community: My faculty colleagues at Chapman University in my native Southern California, including Nubar Hovsepian, Lori Cox Han, John Compton, and the late Donald Will, for providing me friendship, mentorship, the professional and institutional context in which this research took shape, and for encouraging its completion.

Writing is a solitary activity, but it is never done alone. My wife, Christine, has never failed to give me a shoulder to lean against, an ear to hear concerns about this project, and, together with our daughters, Elizabeth and Catherine, the most important reasons for finishing it. The sacrifices have all been shared, but any errors in the result are mine alone.

Chapter 1: Politicization in domestic and foreign policy

I. Defining politicization

Politicization refers to a host of separate but related presidential interventions into the bureaucratic functions of the office. Its most common (or commonly recognized) form is when presidents replace apolitical bureaucrats with party or personal loyalists. Politicization can also refer to the "layering" of political appointees, "on top of the career civil personnel."[6] Taken together, these reflect a broader strategy of *substitution*, of political for apolitical officials or actors.

In the U.S., the insertion of partisans or ideological loyalists into administrative positions goes at least as far back as Jackson, who in his 1829 address to Congress described such offices as "created solely for the benefit of the people… [and thus] not established to give support to particular men at the public expense." Jackson continued, "No individual wrong is, therefore, done by removal, since neither appointment to or continuance in office is a matter of right."[7] Jacksonian democracy rid the appointment system of its prior focus on social notables, initiating a long migration toward political criteria and spoils that gave parties of the second party system, increasingly organized and nationally integrated, greater control over public policy. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, competition between parties and volatility within them, as well as post-bellum growth in bureaucratic capacity (including an unmanageable number of posts to fill), gave rise to pressures for civil-service reform.[8]

As Gailmard and Patty indicate, these reforms, epitomized by the 1883 Pendleton Act, were not motivated by concerns about expertise, but were grounded in patronage struggles between presidents and Congress. The explosion in the size of the federal bureaucracy during the New Deal and World War II, and an increasingly sophisticated and institutionalized presidential component, now housed in the Executive Office of the President (EOP), did little to eliminate policy's political dimension. Instead, presidential efforts shifting from negotiating legislation with Congress to exerting control over administration. As a result, in the modern presidency, pressures to professionalize and

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[6] David E. Lewis, "Presidents and the Politicization of the United States Federal Government, 1988-2004" (American Political Science Association: The 101st Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C., 2005); Ezra N. Suleiman, *Dismantling Democratic States* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003).

[7] Quoted in Bernard S. Silberman, *Cages of Reason: The Rise of the Rational State in France, Japan, the United States, and Great Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 238-39.

[8] Sean Gailmard and John W. Patty, *Learning While Governing: Expertise and Accountability in the Executive Branch*, Chicago studies in American politics, (Chicago ; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2013); Silberman, *Cages of Reason*.

rationalize policy on the one hand, and to politicize it on the other, can be viewed as a non-monotonic push-and-pull.[9]

Politicization via retention

As Jackson made clear in 1829, substitution involves not only appointment but *retention* of officials, granting safe harbor to political loyalists and rotating, purging or fatally neglecting non-loyalists or civil careerists. Presidents after Jackson used such retention strategies widely, and it was not until the 1890s that arbitrary removals were addressed explicitly by presidents.[10] Nonetheless, inasmuch as official tenure is not statutorily fixed and service largely remains at the president's pleasure, removal of officials directly or indirectly remains a key facet of politicization. While qualitative studies of politicization have focused on episodes of both appointment and retention, quantitative studies have been largely confined only to appointment, thus due in part to the relative accessibility of data, such as increases in the number of appointees.[11] To my knowledge there has been little data-driven, quantitative work on politicization via retention, which by definition requires granular information on officials' tenure.[12] This study, particularly the next chapter, attempts to amend that.

Politicizing, non-politically

Studies of modern-era politicization typically focus on domestic policy, and conforming processes in foreign policy are less well understood. One reason why is a difficulties in measurement. While we generally understand politicization to mean, "playing politics," what politics signifies is not clear in every context. Does loyalty to the president mean shared political *ideology*, common party *identity*, or similar *preferences* on the operational details of policy? When it comes to domestic policy all three tend to overlap. Ideology frequently predicts party and vice versa, and both help predict, though imperfectly, the operational dimension of policy preference. Because of this, researchers are likely to have success with customary proxy metrics, like one-dimensional (liberal-

[9] Gailmard and Patty, *Learning While Governing*; Suleiman, *Dismantling Democratic States*.
[10] Gailmard and Patty, *Learning While Governing*, 101.
[11] David E. Lewis, "Where do Presidents Politicize? Evidence from the George W. Bush Administration," *Working Papers: Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions (CSDI)* (2009), https://www.vanderbilt.edu/csdi/research/CSDI_WP_02-2009.pdf.
[12] In the comparative field an exception is the measurement of mid-career departures of Japanese bureaucrats (the so called *amakudari*, or descent from heaven). Suleiman also indirectly assesses the "revolving door" among U.S. bureaucrats and loss of prestige for the civil service, but does not address tenure length of political appointees. Suleiman, *Dismantling Democratic States*.

conservative) ideology scores, to assess just how close to the president (i.e. how "loyal") an official is.[13]

In the domain of foreign and defense policy, however, these same metrics are likely to falter. Ideology scores – drawn from well-recognized and structured policy practices and preferences on domestic policy – are unlikely to capture preferences we see in foreign affairs. The following analysis suggests that all else equal, we should expect politicization to occur in foreign policy as well, albeit one that operates on the basis of different cleavages. The challenge is to identify these relevant cleavages, which may in the end resemble what Krehbiel terms "preferenceship," a stable configuration of policy preferences, rather than partisanship or liberal-conservative ideology.[14] This challenge will also be taken up in the penultimate chapter of this study.

II. Why politicize? Inclinations and adaptations.

Modern presidents, including Nixon, have frequently entered office voicing aspirations to cabinet-style government, with decentralized authority and principled selection criteria for officials.[15] In practice, however, they have generally resorted to centralization, concentrating decisions in the Executive Office of the President (EOP), politicization, or a combination of both.[16]

To understand the reasons why, we will review two dominant perspectives among studies of presidential policymaking – the *managerial* and *institutional* perspectives – and how they have contributed to how we think about politicization.[17] Thereafter we will look at a separate, game-theoretic literature, on *strategic information,* that has played an increasingly important role in contemporary theories of politicization.

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[13] On this point, see Andrew Rudalevige, *Managing the President's Program: Presidential Leadership and Legislative Policy Formulation*, Princeton studies in American politics, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002), 37.

[14] Keith Krehbiel, "Where's the Party?," *British Journal of Political Science* 23, no. 2 (1993), http://www.jstor.org/stable/194249.

[15] In an oft-quoted interview from 1968, Nixon voiced his resolve to "disperse" authority in his administration. See Stephen Hess and James P. Pfiffner, *Organizing the Presidency*, 3rd ed. (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press,, 2002); Earl Mazo and Stephen Hess, *President Nixon: A Political Portrait*, 1st ed. (New York,: Harper & Row, 1968). In that same interview Nixon eschewed partisan "labels" in both foreign and domestic policy matters, on the latter saying, "On the race issue I'm a liberal. On economics I'm a conservative. Domestically, you could say I'm a centrist. But really I don't go for labels. You can't classify me. I'm a pragmatist, but not a pragmatist in the sense that I'm for anything merely because it works. I'm a pragmatist with some deep principles that never change. I'm just not doctrinaire." Mazo and Hess, *President Nixon*, 316.

[16] In Nixon's case, aspirations to dispersed authority quickly turned to centralization and cabinet-balancing. Only later did the full force of politicization take hold, giving rise to what Nathan terms the "administrative state" Nathan, *The Plot That Failed*; Richard P. Nathan, *The Administrative Presidency* (New York: Wiley, 1983).

[17] Burke, *The Institutional Presidency*.

The managerial perspective

Managerial studies comprise the most important early work on postwar presidents. Inaugurated by Neustadt's *Presidential Power* (1960), they include studies of advisory systems, group choice and response to international crises.[18] Managerial accounts vary by how systematically they are framed, but they typically involve similar units of analysis. Independent variables are the individual (president and advisor/officials) or the small group. Personality or small-group factors connect through intervening variables – bad management, flawed cognition, biased or incomplete information – to the dependent variable, policy success or failure. The fly-on-the-wall perspective of managerial studies is akin to the microfoundational level of analysis, though these studies usually lack formal theories of choice. Finally, they are largely composed in the vein of "prescriptive management"[19], and it can be difficult to disentangle their normative and analytical claims.

Managerial studies use thick, naturalistic accounts to frame actors, motivations and choice dynamics. Actors are complex, perhaps contradictory, and so are their interactions. Two assumptions simplify this terrain. The first is that presidents' power and prerogatives force other actors to conform to them. Managerial expertise and the power it creates is corollary to presidential personality, and decision is both cause and consequence of that power. Despite a cast of relevant actors, therefore, analysis centers largely on presidents themselves. A second convenience is that, despite its richness, presidential motivation must, as a practical matter, accommodate to the informational needs of the office.

This is clear in *Presidential Power*. Neustadt praises FDR's competitive style, which involved giving subordinates overlapping responsibilities and forcing them to compete for his attention. Rooted in Roosevelt's "insights, his incentives, and his confidence," such management enriched the president's access to high-quality information. Similar later analyses map personality or psychological factors onto typologies of management styles.[20]

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[18] Richard E. Neustadt, *Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership* (New York: Wiley,, 1960).

[19] Alexander L. George, "The Case for Multiple Advocacy in Making Foreign Policy," *American Political Science Review* 66, no. 3 (1972).

[20] John P. Burke, *Honest Broker?: The National Security Advisor and Presidential Decision Making*, 1st ed., Joseph V. Hughes Jr. and Holly O. Hughes Series on the Presidency and Leadership, (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2009); Cecil Van Meter Crabb and Kevin V. Mulcahy, *American National Security: A Presidential Perspective* (Pacific Grove, Calif.: Brooks/Cole, 1991); Alexander L. George, *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy: The Effective Use of Information and Advice*, Westview Special Studies in International Relations, (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1980); Alexander L. George and Juliette L. George, *Presidential Personality And Performance* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1998); Richard Tanner Johnson, *Managing the White House; an intimate study of the Presidency*, 1st ed. (New York,:

Organizational *mechanisms* (or what George terms "procedural tools"), used by presidents to control the decision making process, express core tendencies in each president's style and are reflected in advisory systems. Fostering competition through overlapping jurisdictions and advisory responsibilities (*competitive* system: FDR) is one such mechanism. Centralization of information flow within a hierarchy (*formalistic* style: Truman, Eisenhower, Nixon) is another, as is competitive, small-group deliberation, with the president working closely with a counselor (*collegial style*: Kennedy, Johnson). Each mechanism has benefits, in decisional control and high-quality information, and costs, in presidential attention and in possibly distorted information.[21]

Despite the variation, however, there is a through-line, an ur-mechanism suggested first by Neustadt's appraisal of Roosevelt: Rivalry among advisors, with differing opinions and sources of information, will *ceteris paribus* contribute to better policy.[22] Too little competition can result in easy, pre-screened answers or, in Neustadt's words, "'happy thoughts' in high places".[23] But too much can be bad as well, as subordinates vying for a presidential audience introduce bias in their messaging. For Johnson, the middle-ground solution is Kennedy's *collegial* approach. From the center of his close-knit network, Kennedy encouraged advisors to "staff out problems and generate solutions which… fuse the strongest elements of divergent points of view."[24]

George expands this idea of controlled competition into what he calls *multiple advocacy*.[25] He recognizes that advice can be distorted, not only by an advisor's interests but also by specific exploitable strengths: personal or bureaucratic resources. Competence or objectivity norms may reduce the problem of interests, but not that of strengths or resources. These "maldistributions" must be equalized, requiring a new role, a *custodian-manager*, to strengthen weak policy advocates, bring in new actors (a devil's

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Harper & Row, 1974); Roger B. Porter, *Presidential Decision Making: The Economic Policy Board* (Cambridge University Press, 1982).

[21] Burke, *Honest Broker?: The National Security Advisor and Presidential Decision Making*; George, *Decisionmaking*; Johnson, *Managing the White House*.

[22] There is a long intellectual tradition that views competition among ideas as a logical analog to other kinds of market competition, and that "marketplaces" for ideas lead to better decision making. As mechanisms, idea markets do not need to built as much as enabled, demanding restraint so as not to discourage their free exchange; see John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, 2nd ed. (London: J.W. Parker,, 1859).; also Holmes's opinion in Schenck v. United States, No. 437 (U.S. Supreme Court Mar 3, 1919, 1919). This is an important normative argument in literature on presidential foreign policy, and is a commonplace among practitioners. According to George, for example, multiple sources of advice, set into competition with each other, can potentially offer the "functional equivalent of a rational model" of policy making, a technique known as *competitive analysis* within the foreign policy community.

[23] Richard E. Neustadt, "Staffing the Presidency," in *The National Security Council; Jackson subcommittee papers on policy-making at the Presidential level*, ed. Henry M. Jackson (New York: Praeger, 1965).

[24] Johnson, *Managing the White House*.

[25] George, "Multiple Advocacy."; George, *Decisionmaking*.

advocate, for instance) and ensure the policy team has access to multiple channels of information.[26]

Assigning a custodial agent presents a moral hazard. The agent must commit voluntarily to a limited process role. She must not advocate or work to expand her portfolio, and most importantly must be unbiased with regard to final decisions. While many could fill this "honest broker" role, in foreign policy a natural candidate is the president's National Security Advisor (formally the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, or APNSA). There have been many efforts to find correlation between positive brokerage by the APNSA and decision quality. These often point to policy failures in post-Eisenhower administrations, when the APNSA tended to trade neutrality for advocacy.[27]

Finally, while the president is a political actor, her advisors should not be. They should possess both specific, professional expertise and hardy independence in policy discussions, even if this means delivering bad news.[28] This *neutral competence* can be traced to the politics-administration dichotomy in traditional studies of government organization, "grounded in interrelated normative and empirical assumptions about the role of bureaucracy in government."[29]

As an empirical matter, neutrality can be "built into" the policy process (for example, via delegation, which puts policy control in the hands of non-partisan subordinates[30]), or it may serve as a device of institutional learning.[31] Or neutral competence can be viewed as normative, valued by presidents and their policy teams as a way to increase bureaucratic responsiveness within a given political context.[32] In the

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[26] Alex Mintz and Karl DeRouen Jr, *Understanding Foreign Policy Decision Making* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[27] The case of Nixon APNSA Henry Kissinger is illustrative; see Gregory M. Herek, Irving L. Janis, and Paul Huth, "Decision making during international crises: Is quality of process related to outcome?," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 31, no. 2 (1987).

[28] Heclo, "Neutral Competence."; Herbert Kaufman, "Emerging Conflicts in the Doctrines of Public Administration," *The American Political Science Review* 50, no. 4 (1956), http://www.jstor.org/stable/1951335; Harold Seidman, *Politics, Position, and Power: The Dynamics of Federal Organization*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Patrick J. Wolf, "Neutral and Responsive Competence: The Bureau of the Budget, 1939-1948, Revisited," *Administration & Society* 31, no. 1 (1999/03/01 1999).

[29] Suleiman, *Dismantling Democratic States*; William F. West, "Neutral Competence and Political Responsiveness: An Uneasy Relationship," *Policy Studies Journal* 33, no. 2 (2005).

[30] Gary Miller, "Above Politics: Credible Commitment and Efficiency in the Design of Public Agencies," *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory: J-PART* 10, no. 2 (2000), http://www.jstor.org/stable/3525646.

[31] Matthew Dull, "Why PART? The Institutional Politics of Presidential Budget Reform," *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory: J-PART* 16, no. 2 (2006), http://www.jstor.org/stable/3840365.

[32] Matthew J. Dickinson and Andrew Rudalevige, "Presidents, Responsiveness, and Competence: Revisiting the "Golden Age" at the Bureau of the Budget," *Political Science Quarterly* 119, no. 4 (2004), http://www.jstor.org/stable/20202433.

context of multiple advocacy, neutral competence is both empirical and normative. It comes about as a consequence of balanced or managed competition (the "functional equivalent of a rationality model," in George's words). On the other hand it denotes the ethic of custodianship, meant to reduce moral hazard. Scholars like Neustadt and Johnson recognize that neutral competence is often honored in the breach, and presidents must face the possibility of infighting, parochialism, even the manipulation of information among their subordinates. Nonetheless, sound deliberation will begin with assembling the right team, a highly competent, broad-minded staff embodying what Heclo describes as the "loyalty that argues back."

The institutionalist perspective

Institutional studies arose in part as response to the "crisis" of managerial scholarship, portended by Heclo's observation in 1977 that the subfield had been fueled participant accounts and anecdote rather than systematic research. Cited by critics were its weak theoretical foundations, absence of quantitative methods and inadequate hypothesis testing; in Edward's words, it "too often [failed] to meet the standards" of the larger field.[33] The push to re-align presidential studies has led to a growing emphasis on theory-building, expressed in the adoption of behavioral models from transaction cost, informational, and new institutional economics, and the use of concepts such as asset-specificity and path-dependence, as well as attempts to discover or build datasets that can be subject to statistical testing.[34]

Historical developments also contributed to the institutional turn: the growth of the presidency in complexity, size of workforce, and budget;[35] the apparent decline in presidential interest in the office's managerial dimensions, the erosion of competence norms, and the increased willingness of presidents to politicize its policy machinery or to act unilaterally.[36] In the area of presidential foreign policy, an important shift came with the reevaluation of the Eisenhower presidency, following declassifications between 1972

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[33] George C. Edwards, *Public Presidency: The Pursuit of Popular Support* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983); Heclo, *Strangers*; William G. Howell, "Quantitative Approaches to Studying the Presidency," in *The Oxford handbook of the American Presidency*, ed. George C. Edwards and William G. Howell, The Oxford Handbooks of American Politics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[34] Amy B. Zegart, *Flawed by Design: The Evolution of the CIA, JCS, and NSC* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999).

[35] John P. Burke, *The Institutional Presidency* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1992); Burke, *The Institutional Presidency*; Lyn Ragsdale and John J. Theis, "The Institutionalization of the American Presidency, 1924-92," *American Journal of Political Science* 41, no. 4 (1997), http://www.jstor.org/stable/2960490.

[36] Terry M. Moe, "The Politicized Presidency," in *The New Direction in American Politics*, ed. John E. Chubb and Paul E. Peterson (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1985); Terry M. Moe, "Power and Political Institutions," *Perspectives on Politics* 3, no. 2 (2005), http://www.jstor.org/stable/3688027; Terry M. Moe and William G. Howell, "Unilateral Action and Presidential Power: A Theory," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 29, no. 4 (1999).

and 1985. Long accused of "organized absenteeism," Eisenhower was revealed to have worked with a "hidden hand," concealing adroit management strategies behind a public posture of equanimity.[37] More importantly, as much as any modern president, Eisenhower actively worked within the formal confines of the interagency process – a process he was largely responsible for institutionalizing – as well as outside of it, saving key decisions for more informal advisory arrangements.

With Eisenhower revisionism, the variance among administrations that once gave analytical bite to managerial approaches weakened. It appeared that, despite differences in personality and style, presidents experience decision making in many of the same ways. Such continuity provided an empirical complement to the analytical and methodological turn towards institutions. Context is important, even for presidents; as Moe writes, "certain factors have structured the incentives of all modern presidents along the same basic lines."[38]

Presidential scholars focused increasingly on those structured incentives, and the relationship between presidents and the institutionalized office. For some, institutionalization suggests a renewed need for administrative efforts. Presidents who could think organizationally, adjusting their management style to the robust organizational environment, would fare better than those that do not. Other scholars held that bureaucratic inertia drove presidents to try to enforce responsiveness in executive organizations by politicizing them (through appointing political allies, e.g.) or to skirt them, centralizing policymaking, for example, within the Executive Office of the President.[39]

While their starting point are the institutions and organizations that comprise the institutional presidency, scholars have sought to strengthen statistical inference in their work by considering other units of analysis: presidential vetoes,[40] executive orders,[41] appointments,[42] public statements,[43] agency originations[44] and so forth. More generally

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[37] Fred I. Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency: Eisenhower as Leader* (New York: Basic Books, 1982).

[38] Moe, "The Politicized Presidency."

[39] B. Dan Wood and Richard W. Waterman, "The Dynamics of Political Control of the Bureaucracy," *The American Political Science Review* 85, no. 3 (1991), http://www.jstor.org/stable/1963851.

[40] Charles M. Cameron, *Veto Bargaining: Presidents and the Politics of Negative Power*, Political Economy of Institutions and Decisions, (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Nolan M. McCarty, "Presidential Reputation and the Veto," *Economics & Politics* 9, no. 1 (1997).

[41] William G. Howell, *Power without Persuasion: The Politics of Direct Presidential Action* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press,, 2003).

[42] David E. Lewis, *The Politics of Presidential Appointments: Political Control and Bureaucratic Performance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

[43] Brandice Canes-Wrone, *Who Leads Whom?: Presidents, Policy, and the Public*, Studies in Communication, Media, and Public Opinion, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

these may be described as "decision points" or discrete "episodes of governance".[45] Even as analytical units have proliferated, however, actor motivation has become simplified, modeled as implied or explicit cost-benefit analysis, optimization, or strategic choice. Especially influential has been Moe's claim that the institutional presidency presents an intractable structure. Under increasing public pressure, presidents turn to *centralization* and *politicization* as cost-effective ways to pursue their policy agendas.

This cost-reduction or optimization logic has been adapted to understand foreign policy. The design of agencies, such as NSC, CIA or the Joint Chiefs, result from seminal bargains between the president and the national security bureaucracies. These bargains are sticky (i.e. costly to modify later) and the growing disconnect between initial design and later needs of the president, have led presidents to personalize and "presidentialize" policy processes, reorganizing and strengthening the professional staff of the NSC, for example, and creating close-support positions such as Staff Secretary or APNSA.[46]

Whether in domestic or foreign policy, presidents seek responsiveness of the office's bureaucracies, and do so in a manner that minimizes transactions or information costs, or a combination of the two.[47] To achieve this postwar presidents have tended to *centralize* and *politicize* policy. The former refers to the concentrating of policy decisions within the Executive Office of the President (EOP), particularly the White House Office (WHO), but can be extended to include the reliance on staff whose only "constituent" is the president. Politicization refers to the appointment of political allies into the bureaucracy, as a means to exert presidential control over various parts of policy: agency budgeting, rulemaking, personnel decisions and the internal allocation of agency resources.[48]

Both mechanisms help presidents overcome the principal-agent problem created through shared, or delegated authority. Allies in bureaucratic leadership positions can "monitor bureaucratic activity and communicate the president's vision to the press and agency employees, clients, and stakeholders."[49] Centralizing policy allows presidents a more direct monitoring and control over staff efforts and the flow of relevant information. It lowers the overall transactions costs of policy bargaining between the White House and bureaucracy, but improved surveillance over some dimensions of policy making comes at a cost: less access to technical expertise resident in executive bureaucracies.

Early institutional studies tend to view the growing importance of both mechanisms as secular, increasing *pari passu* growth in institutionalization and public demands for presidential performance. Other scholars assert that use of these

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[44] David E. Lewis, *Presidents and the Politics of Agency Design: Political Insulation in the United States Government Bureaucracy, 1946-1997* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003).

[45] Charles M. Cameron, "The Political Economy of the U.S. Presidency," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Economy*, ed. Barry R. Weingast and Donald A. Wittman, The Oxford Handbooks of Political Science (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[46] Zegart, *Flawed by Design*.

[47] Rudalevige, *Managing the President's Program*.

[48] Lewis, *The Politics of Presidential Appointments*.

[49] Lewis, *The Politics of Presidential Appointments*.

mechanisms may depend on partisan or ideological differences, or on administrative philosophy. Quantitative studies show, however, that presidents deploy these mechanisms on a circumstantial basis, centralizing a policy process, for example, when the policies proposed are new, implicated multiple agency jurisdictions, or call for substantial personnel changes or bureaucratic organization. Politicization of agency personnel, on the other hand, occur more frequently when the overall policy views of the agency differ from those of the president. Neither centralization or politicization have grown in a linear manner, nor is their use strongly predicted by party identification or administrative philosophy.

Finally, a central assertion in the institutional perspective is that neutral competence has declined in importance, both as organizational reality and normative framework. In this argument, the complexities of the postwar presidency call for a new norm, *responsive competence*, in which loyalty replaces neutrality and competence is reframed as the capacity of personnel to address presidential concerns about the "dynamics of political leadership."[50] Responsiveness norms both strengthen, and are strengthened by, the mechanisms of centralization and politicization. Loyalty maximizes trust within closed policy circles and, in the case of a political appointee, closes the gaps of interests that otherwise may worsen moral hazard. By early accounts, neutrality's decline, like responsiveness's rise, has been secular. However, recent studies suggest both norms are potentially useful in promoting the president's agenda,[51] and, like the politicization and centralization, are valued in contingent manner, based on political circumstances and a policy's specific requirements.

Politicization from both perspectives

From the managerial perspective, politicization is largely conceptualized as a dangerous tendency, a pathology resulting from a president's personality, poor staffing, badly organized policy processes, and faltering behavioral norms. And while a president's inclination to politicize may not be altogether preventable, the politicization's effects may be: first, by strengthening the policy process organizationally – imposing managed competition or multiple advocacy and bringing in an honest broker – and second, by strengthening competence norms. Working together, these safeguards promise a more rational policy process, and can, it is hoped, slow the de-professionalization of the executive bureaucracy.

Institutionalism, emerging in the 1980s as the first and still most important *post-managerial* perspective, is far more agnostic about whether such reforms will, or should, be made to work. For institutionalists, politicization is not a bug in the postwar presidency but a feature, not an irrational flaw but a rational adaptation, intended to maximize control over an increasingly complex, institutionalized and unwieldy executive branch.

[50] Moe, "The Politicized Presidency."
[51] Dickinson and Rudalevige, "Presidents, Responsiveness, and Competence."

III. The strategic information perspective

The same decade as Moe's seminal work, game theorists working in micro- and organizational economics began devising ways to model communication between an uninformed principal, such as a manager or CEO, and the experts who advise her.[52] Developed in the context of the private firm, these games of strategic information touch on themes that are central to public administration and presidential studies, namely use of information by presidents, staff and agency heads to control the policymaking process. These formal models have had a growing impact on presidential studies; studies that use them, while still drawing insights from managerial and institutional approaches, can be thought of as constituting a second, post-managerial perspective.[53]

This *strategic information perspective*, like institutionalism, falls broadly within the domain of rational actor perspectives.[54] While the latter draws largely on transaction-cost and new institutional economics, the strategic information perspective developed from formal work on games of incomplete information.[55] Early work on these Bayesian games, in which players lack basic details about the game they are in (namely the epistemic type of the player they face) gave rise to literatures on signaling,[56] cheap talk[57] and, in theoretic work on financial accounting and bank behavior, to models of strategic communication that incorporates hard and soft information.[58] These provide a robust framework for contemporary work in organizational economics, particularly on questions about the nature of principal-agent communication, and prediction of when a principal may choose communication or delegation.[59]

There are superficial similarities between the handling of information and decisional control within a private firm (among CEOs, senior managers and middle-level management) and their handling within the White House (between a president and her advisory, policy staff and agency heads). Both principals lack policy-relevant information and must avail themselves of informed, possibly biased advisors. In both cases making informed choices means accurately updating one's prior beliefs on the

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[52] Vincent P. Crawford and Joel Sobel, "Strategic Information Transmission," *Econometrica* 50, no. 6 (1982), http://www.jstor.org/stable/1913390.

[53] This includes authors already cited, including *inter alia* Lewis, Rudalevige, Cameron; see also Gailmard and Patty, *Learning While Governing*.

[54] Bruce Bueno De Mesquita, "Foreign Policy Analysis and Rational Choice Models," *Compendium Project (International Studies Association)* (2010).

[55] John C. Harsanyi, "Games with Incomplete Information Played by "Bayesian" Players, I-III.," *Management Science* 14, no. 3 (1967), http://www.jstor.org/stable/2628673.

[56] Michael Spence, "Job Market Signaling," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 87, no. 3 (1973), http://www.jstor.org/stable/1882010.

[57] Crawford and Sobel, "Strategic Information Transmission."

[58] Jeremy Bertomeu and Iván Marinovic, "A Theory of Hard and Soft Information," *The Accounting Review* 91, no. 1 (2015).

[59] Philippe Aghion and Jean Tirole, "Formal and Real Authority in Organizations," *Journal of Political Economy* 105, no. 1 (1997), http://www.jstor.org/stable/2138869; Wouter Dessein, "Authority and Communication in Organizations," *The Review of Economic Studies* 69, no. 4 (2002), http://www.jstor.org/stable/1556723.

strength or weakness of advisor information, and failing to do so when necessary carries risk – cost or inefficiency, loss of credibility, and in the extreme case, existential crisis.[60]

In reality, however, differences between the two environments are more profound, from the institutional context, to prevailing norms and organizational culture, to systems of accountability, hiring and dismissal, and the specific nature of risk, cost and crisis. In other words, the two have much more in common with the abstract formalization than they do with each other. Such formal models or games are not useful because we can credibly treat a public organization like a private firm; they are useful because they say something meaningful about the choices faced by principals and agents in either case.[61]

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[60] This set-up may remind readers of the traditional *agency problem* – where a principal must rely on a potentially self-interested agent to carry out a task. Because she cannot monitor the agent directly the principal must often rely on some mechanism(s) to guarantee the agent's effort. The strategic information approach – like many game-theoretic approaches in political science – falls within this analytic framework. The key distinction here is that agent effort is not (and in fact, cannot be) monitored; instead, the focal outcome is the coarsening of messages, which helps overcome communication problems that arise from bias. Both principal-agent and strategic information models, however, reach a similar conclusion – principals would prefer 'good' (i.e. more preference-aligned) agents over 'bad' ones. The advantage of the strategic information model, however, is that it better describes the policy development environment, where outcomes are not readily measurable or contractible, and where truth claims are difficult if not impossible to verify. See Nolan M. McCarty and Adam Meirowitz, *Political Game Theory: An Introduction*, Analytical Methods for Social Research, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[61] And in fact these games have seen important applications in political science, now more than two decades old. Too many and varied to cover here, notable applications include the use of lobbying efforts (David Austen-Smith and John R. Wright, "Competitive lobbying for a legislator's vote," *Social Choice and Welfare* 9, no. 3 (1992), http://www.jstor.org/stable/41106026; David Austen-Smith and John R. Wright, "Counteractive Lobbying," *American Journal of Political Science* 38, no. 1 (1994), http://www.jstor.org/stable/2111334.); the raising of campaign funds to deter entry of electoral challengers (David Epstein and Peter Zemsky, "Money Talks: Deterring Quality Challengers in Congressional Elections," *The American Political Science Review* 89, no. 2 (1995), http://www.jstor.org/stable/2082426.); and in international relations, the use of costly signals to establish foreign policy commitments (James D. Fearon, "Signaling Foreign Policy Interests: Tying Hands versus Sinking Costs," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41, no. 1 (1997).). Legal scholar Eric Posner attempts to explain social norms broadly as signaling equilibria (Eric A. Posner, *Law and Social Norms* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000).). Applications in anthropology and sociology include signaling in marriage "markets" (Richard Breen and Lynn Prince Cooke, "The Persistence of the Gendered Division of Domestic Labour," *European Sociological Review* 21, no. 1 (2005), http://www.jstor.org/stable/3559583.), identity signaling and mimicry (Michael Bacharach and Diego Gambetta, "Trust as Type Detection," in *Trust and Deception in Virtual Societies*, ed. Cristiano Castelfranchi and Yao-Hua Tan (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands,, 2001).), and signals used in criminal syndicates.

Cheap talk, policy advice and politicization

To understand the choice environment faced by experts and principals – or by officials/advisory staff and presidents – we turn to a simplified cheap talk model, based on Crawford and Sobel (hereafter CS).[62] The setting here is as simple as possible: There is a single informed expert (E) and a single uninformed decision maker (P). The expert is privately informed of the state of the world θ, which is uniformly distributed on the unit interval [0,1]. The decision maker must make some policy y. Her payoff depends on her policy choice y and on θ, and is given by the quadratic loss function:

$$U^P(y,\theta) = -(y-\theta)^2 \qquad (1.1)$$

(Diego Gambetta, *Codes of the Underworld: How Criminals Communicate* (Princeton University Press, 2009).) Finally, it is worth noting that, in terms of linking game-theoretic models with an empirical research agenda, no field has been impacted by signaling theory more than animal behavior and morphology; see William A. Searcy and Stephen Nowicki, *The Evolution of Animal Communication: Reliability and Deception in Signaling Systems* (Princeton University Press, 2005)..

Cheap talk models, meanwhile, have most frequently been used to model legislative phenomena, such as legislative design: David Austen-Smith, "Information and Influence: Lobbying for Agendas and Votes," *American Journal of Political Science* 37, no. 3 (1993), http://www.jstor.org/stable/2111575; Thomas W. Gilligan and Keith Krehbiel, "Collective Decisionmaking and Standing Committees: An Informational Rationale for Restrictive Amendment Procedures," *Journal of Law, Economics, & Organization* 3, no. 2 (1987), http://www.jstor.org/stable/764831; Vijay Krishna and John Morgan, "A Model of Expertise," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 116, no. 2 (2001)., as well as lobbying and delegation: Morten Bennedsen and Sven Feldmann, "Informational lobbying and political contributions," *Journal of Public Economics* 90, no. 4-5 (2006); David Epstein and Sharyn O'Halloran, *Delegating Powers: A Transaction Cost Politics Approach to Policy Making under Separate Powers*, Political Economy of Institutions and Decisions, (Cambridge, U.K. ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Helen V. Milner and B. Peter Rosendorff, "Trade Negotiations, Information and Domestic Politics: The Role of Domestic Groups," *Economics & Politics* 8, no. 2 (1996). For a summary, see J. Sobel, *Giving and receiving advice* (2011).

[62] This discussion is based upon CS; Dessein, "Authority and Communication."; Gilligan and Krehbiel, "Collective Decisionmaking."; Krishna and Morgan, "A Model of Expertise."; Vijay Krishna and John Morgan, "Cheap Talk," in *The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics*, ed. Steven N. Durlauf and Lawrence Blume (Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

Without knowing θ or any communication from the expert E, P would rely on prior knowledge and choose $y = 1/2$.[63] Alternately, she may base her decision on a costless message $m \in [0,1]$ sent by the expert E, whose payoff is given by:

$$U^E(y, \theta, b) = -(y - (\theta + b))^2 \tag{1.2}$$

Note that m does not appear in any payoff function (i.e. m is cheap talk), nor must it refer to the state of the world θ (i.e. it is soft). Because of this, the decision maker may always simply ignore the expert's message and select y on the basis of her prior. This is the so-called "babbling" equilibrium; in this case the expert has no incentive to convey any information at all, and may as well send messages at random.

The parameter $b \geq 0$ is the preference-similarity parameter, sometimes described as the expert's *bias*. In the CS version, the decision maker maximizes their payoff at θ (the precise state of the world), but what really matters is the distance between the decision maker's ideal point and that of the expert. For example, if the decision maker has a "biased" ideal, say, at $\theta + b_P$ the preference-similarity parameter would be simply $|b - b_P|$. Play proceeds as follows:

1. The expert observes θ. "Expertise" is represented here by the expert's superior access to information.
2. The expert sends message m
3. The decision maker chooses some policy y.

If the preferences of expert and decision maker are perfectly aligned ($b = 0$), there are multiple equilibria, including the babbling equilibrium common to all costless communication. There are also one in which communication is perfectly revealing, $\bar{y}(m) = \theta$.

What about equilibria when there is separation of interests between expert and decision maker? For CS, any degree of bias (i.e. when $b > 0$) results in the loss of information. If the biased expert conveyed θ precisely, then she would have the incentive to exaggerate the state to reach her ideal at $m = \theta + b$. Anticipating this the principal would select $y = m - b$, and the expert would thus send $m = \theta + 2b$, and so forth. Provided b is not too large, the only informative equilibria will involve noisy or imprecise messaging. For example, the expert might simply say the state of the world is "low" or "high." CS express such noisy or coarse messages as partitions over the state space:

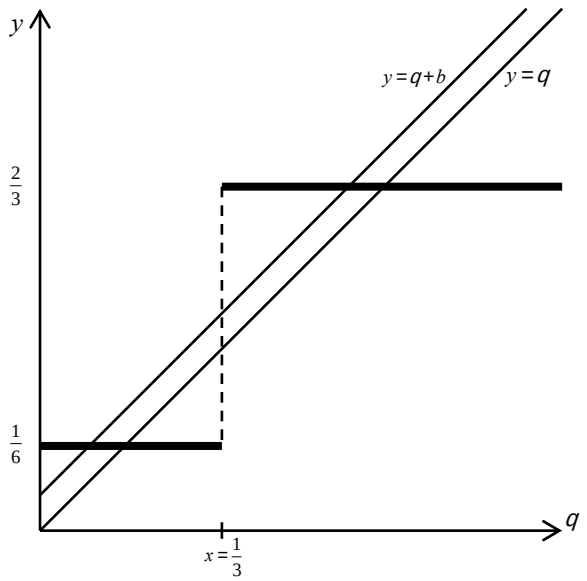
[63] CS assume the decision maker holds a prior belief given by a unit uniform distribution. Maximizing her utility implies taking an action such that $y(m) = E[\theta|m]$ or, in the babbling case, $1/2$. Krishna and Morgan, "Cheap Talk."

Here the unique state x partitions the state space; the expert reports "low" when $\theta \in [0, x)$, in which case the decision maker's optimal policy is the middle of the "low" interval, $y_L = x/2$. The expert reports "high" when $\theta \in [x, 1]$, and induces a policy at the middle of the "high" interval, $y_H = (1 + x)/2$. At x the expert is indifferent between the two induced policies; i.e. they must be the same distance from her ideal point, i.e. $(x + b) - y_L = y_H - (x + b)$. With substitution this simplifies to:

$$x = 1/2 - 2b \tag{1.3}$$

Given a bias of $b = 1/12$ the state space would be separated at $x = 1/3$. A "low" report would result in the decision maker choosing $y_L = 1/6$, and a "high" report would result in $y_H = 2/3$. A two-interval partition and the resulting policies are represented graphically in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1: Equilibrium and policies when $b = 1/12$. Adapted from Li (2014)[64]



At $x = 1/3$, the induced policies (the bold lines) are equidistant from the expert's ideal $y = \theta + b$. Note that the resulting intervals are larger (i.e. noisier or coarser) in the direction of the expert's bias. As bias increases, the "low" interval will shrink and the "high" interval will grow in size. Intuitionally this suggests "bad news" (from the expert's point of view) will be more informative. Moreover, given $x = 1/2 - 2b$, once b gets "high enough" (that is, $b \geq 1/4$), then there no feasible way to partition the state space and the only possible outcome is the uninformative babbling equilibrium.

In this example there is only a single cut point, with two resulting intervals; at low levels of bias there are additional equilibria with finer intervals. The maximum number of

[64] Tao Li, "Expert advising under checks and balances," *Social Choice and Welfare* 42, no. 2 (2014), http://www.jstor.org/stable/43662484.

possible intervals is finite and uniquely calculated for a given bias parameter. As the interests of sender and receiver converge, the messages potentially conveyed in equilibrium become finer and more informative, as given in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1. Example calculations for different levels of preference separation. Note that utility to the principal from delegation (far right) exceeds centralization with communication.

Preference separation:	Maximum number of partitions: [65]	Principal's expected utility under *centralization with communication*:	Principals' utility under *delegation*:[66]
b	$N(b) = -\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2}\sqrt{1 + \frac{2}{b}}$	$EU^P = -\frac{1}{12N^2} - \frac{b^2(N^2-1)}{3}$	$U^P = -b^2$
$\frac{1}{4}$	1	-0.0833	-0.0625
$\frac{1}{12}$	2	-0.02778	-0.0069
$\frac{1}{60}$	5	-0.0056	-0.0003
$\frac{1}{120}$	8	-0.0028	-0.0001
$\frac{1}{1000}$	22	-0.0003	-0.0000
$\frac{1}{5000}$	50	-0.0001	-0.0000
$\frac{1}{1{,}000{,}000}$	707	-0.0000	-0.0000

At $b = 1/4$ there is at most one partition. This is the babbling equilibrium. With smaller preference separation maximum partitions increase, although noisier equilibria (those with fewer partitions) are still possible. The decision maker's expected utility (EU^P) increases, however, as the partitions become finer; such communication benefits both expert and principal, and it is assumed that both parties will coordinate on these finer, more informative equilibria. We can summarize the findings of the simplified model as follows:

1. *Noisy, informative messages and uninformative babbling.* When communications involve messages that are unverifiable – i.e. when it is cheap talk or soft information – only an unbiased expert can convey a fully informative message. When interests of the expert and the principal diverge, however, there are two possible outcomes. Either the expert conveys messages that are *informative but noisy*, and the principal chooses a policy that incorporates elements of the communication, or expert messages are uninformative, an outcome called the *babbling equilibrium*, in which case the principal relies on their prior beliefs to select a policy.

[65] The maximum number of intervals for any b is the smallest integer greater than or equal to the equation given here. For this proof and that of principal's expected utility, see CS (1982).

[66] Dessein, "Authority and Communication."

2. *Greater bias means more noise, and 'bad news' is more believable.* There are three key observations relating expert bias to the noisiness of messaging. First, if expert bias is large enough then all messages will be uninformative – the babbling equilibrium. Second, as bias decreases, messages become more precise until, when expert and principal interests align, they are perfectly informative. Third, in the case of noisy communications, messages about the state of the world will be more informative *in the direction contrary to the expert's bias*. Intuitively, we might say that bad news (from the expert's point of view) is more credible than good news that confirms their bias (pandering, i.e.). For example, reports from firms of a loss in value will be seen by observers as more believable than positive reports.

3. *More informative equilibria are preferred by principals and experts.* Cheap talk with bias always involves a loss of information, sometimes described as the *coarsening* of information. Whenever they are feasible, however, equilibria using noisy signaling are Pareto superior to the babbling one, and therefore preferred by both expert and principal. A decision maker will always receive a higher payoff from an advisor with a smaller bias. This can be described as the *ally principle*.[67]

4. *Delegation is nearly always preferred to centralization with communication*. We expect the principal to maintain control (and act according to her prior beliefs) when advisors' or officials' biases are large. Under nearly all circumstances, however, when biases are small enough to make meaningful communication possible delegation will result in higher payoffs, shown in the right-most column in Table 3.2.[68]

Strategic communication in practice

The CS model suggests that presidents and their subordinates communicate strategically, and always with an eye to the policy preferences or bias dividing them. Managerial accounts and administration histories abound with evidence of such calculative behavior. From Truman's "constant consideration" for the personalities and positions of his policy advisors,[69] to Eisenhower's use of "personal equations" to adjust his interactions with officials and staff,[70] to Nixon's obsessive efforts to decode their motivations – it is clear

[67] See John D. Huber and Charles R. Shipan, "Politics, Delegation and Bureaucracy," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Economy*, ed. Barry R. Weingast and Donald A. Wittman, The Oxford Handbooks of Political Science (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[68] Dessein (2002) argues that delegation dominates communicative wherever informative communication is possible (i.e. when $N(b) \geq 2$). With an informative prior and a smaller bias ($b < L/2$), communication dominates delegation where $\sigma(m) < b$. For centralization with communication to dominate delegation, then, requires a highly informative prior (small σ) and relatively noisy (but informative) level of bias.

[69] Johnson, *Managing the White House*, 53.

[70] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand*, 236.

that understanding individual motivations and engaging them in strategic communication is an important, even indispensible, presidential skill. We also see anecdotal evidence of noisy signaling, particularly in the context of policy committees, and its impact on the resulting quality of advice. Truman's Secretary of State Dean Acheson wrote, to wit:

> … it is always possible to get agreement in a committee by increasing the vagueness and generality of a conclusion… The result can be to provide the President with 'agreed' papers, when what is he needs is 'disagreed' papers, and in the end to ask him to give his blessing to platitudes.[71]

Similarly, Eisenhower's Staff Secretary General Andrew Goodpaster, suggested that building consensus on policy often involved a deliberate averaging, with Eisenhower drawing from his advisors opposing points of view before "[developing] the area of common interest, frequently setting them in a broader context, to see if agreement couldn't be reached on some more fundamental basis."[72] Shallow consensus on fundamentals, however, can mask divisions on more granular issues. See for instance Eisenhower's remarks on his presidential rival and arch-conservative Senator Robert Taft:

> On the foreign field, Senator Taft never disagrees with me when we discuss such matters academically or theoretically… However, when we take up each individual problem or case, he easily loses his temper and makes extravagant statements.[73]

When policy required sharp lines, Eisenhower, like other modern presidents, would avoid cabinet-style consultation.[74] In crises, Eisenhower would tap a few close advisors whose motivations he knew well, including his brother Milton, Robert Cutler (APNSA), Sherman Adams (Chief of Staff) and, most famously, his Secretary of State John Foster Dulles.[75]

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[71] Keith C. Clark and Laurence J. Legere, eds., *The President and the Management of National Security: A Report by the Institute for Defense Analyses* (New York,: Praeger, 1969), 220.

[72] Andrew J. Goodpaster, "Organizing the White House," in *The Eisenhower Presidency : Eleven Intimate Perspectives of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, ed. Kenneth W. Thompson, Portraits of American presidents (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984), 67-68, 77.

[73] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand*, 75.

[74] Karl Harr, "Eisenhower's Approach to National Security Decisionmaking," in *The Eisenhower Presidency : Eleven Intimate Perspectives of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, ed. Kenneth W. Thompson, Portraits of American presidents (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984).

[75] For a detailed account of Milton Eisenhower, Dulles and others' roles in an applied case, see David A. Nichols, *Eisenhower 1956: The President's Year of Crisis, Suez and the Brink of War*, 1st Simon & Schuster hardcover ed. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011).

Politicization from the strategic information perspective

The managerial literature clearly advocates for policy-preference diversity, strengthened by competition or brokerage mechanisms. Given the ally principle (#3 above), the strategic information approaches suggests we should be tentative about these mechanisms' long-term viability. While advisors with non-conforming beliefs can in theory balance out policy discussions, in practice they may find themselves unable to deliver granular, accurate policy advice in a convincing fashion.[76]

The key mechanisms identified in the institutional literature fare somewhat better. There is, on the one hand, little theoretical support for *centralization* in the institutionalist sense – i.e. bringing decision-making into the EOP. On the other hand, delegation to agents with small bias is closely related to *politicization*.[77] Considering #3 and #4 above, and with the proviso that the costs of appointment or retention are not too high, we should expect delegation/*politicization* to be presidents' preferred strategy of control.[78]

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[76] In addition, recent experimental studies of markets for unverifiable information indicate they are inefficient, and prone to collapse into babbling equilibria. See Antonio Cabrales et al., *Can there be a Market for Cheap-Talk Information? An Experimental Investigation* (CESifo Group Munich, 2018).

[77] Does delegation always imply small bias? Historical accounts give a mixed impression: Eisenhower, for example, was known to be contemptuous of officials who could not makes decisions independently. But Immerman points out that delegation "was not the same as encouraging independent action…. The subordinate who is making a decision must make that decision through the eyes of his commander." Richard H. Immerman, "Eisenhower and Dulles: Who Made the Decisions?," *Political Psychology* 1, no. 2 (1979), http://www.jstor.org/stable/3791100. On the other hand, Greenstein (1982) argues the president gave officials, those whose expertise on complex matters far exceeded his own, substantial independent discretion, including Treasury Secretary Robert Anderson and Budget Director Joseph Dodge.

[78] A final alternative mechanism is *contracting* – that is, providing "payment" for information. In most of organizational economics and the contracting literature, hard signals alone are considered "observable and verifiable," and thus enforceable contracts can be written on their value: Oliver D. Hart, *Firms, Contracts, and Financial Structure*, Clarendon Lectures in Economics, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

Cheap or soft messages are non-contractible. Importantly, so are messages that *aggregate* both hard and soft information. Since the soft piece's value is unknown to the principal, the hard piece's contribution to the overall value is also unknown; all messages that aggregate hard and soft information are therefore soft. Bertomeu and Marinovic, "Hard and Soft Information." This implies that policy makers operate in an environment that is predominantly soft, despite advisors' and officials' routine deployment of hard numbers – precise measures, numeric asset values, temporal or geospatial data, and the like. Numeric data does not by itself allay the challenges of fostering effective communication.

The nature of expertise

Strategic information models provide a powerful, parsimonious argument for the ally principle, delegation, and, in a similar vein, presidential politicization. Such models, which in simplified form ignore institutional costs or effects, can be readily extended to incorporate them.[79]

An important consideration in the context of this study is how the literature conceptualizes expertise. In the simplified model expertise is exogenous, a fixed, binary characteristic of the agent or expert that is expressed in their knowledge of the state of the world, θ. Fundamentally, however, "expertise" – what is really the possession of private policy-relevant information – is an institutional phenomenon. Institutions define it and provide avenues for its transfer, whether through education, training or credentialing. Most importantly, institutions have the capacity to generate additional private information about the world. No institutions, so to speak, means no expertise, no asymmetry, and no *informational advantage* to generate the choice dynamics modeled above.

Looked at from this perspective, administration officials' informational advantage may not be a matter of education or professional experience, nor the direct effect of a choice to inform themselves. Nor does it necessarily involve normative commitments. It will be linked to what I call the *robustness* of their policy unit or agency – its institutionalized capacity to produce private policy information. Personal characteristics (level of education, public-sector experience or commitment to competence norms) are therefore likely to be important only insofar as they strengthen the official's attachment to their respective agency.

IV. Points of departure

This discussion can be summarized with four general hypotheses. While these are largely exploratory propositions, they will be sharpened as they are operationalized in the chapters that follow.

The first and most basic proposition is that the *ally principle will generally hold.* Notwithstanding the principled criteria presidents adduce on taking office, or the promise of competitive analysis and honest brokerage, presidents have good reason to wield politicization in the staffing and retention of officials. This is not due to the ideological comfort or partisan shibboleths loyalists provide, but to the counter-intuitive dynamic of cheap or soft advice: advisors and officials with conforming views are better able to provide quality information.

Secondly, *ideology will be operative in politicization, at least in domestic policy*. New presidential administrations are built in the main on partisan identity. Nixon administration officials included a few stand-out Democrats, including former Texas Governor John Connally (Treasury Secretary) and Assistant on Domestic Policy Daniel Patrick Moynihan. But their presence was the exception. Ideology score, capturing how extreme or moderate an official is within the same party cohort, is like to be an effective

[79] Gailmard and Patty, *Learning While Governing*; Gilligan and Krehbiel, "Collective Decisionmaking."

measure of affinity to the president. However, we need to keep in mind that on issues of policy what matters is not party or ideology by themselves, but the underlying policy preferences. In domestic matters, ideology can stand in for this "preferenceship," but in foreign affairs it may not.

This leads to the third hypothesis: *Patterns of politicization will be impacted by policy domain*. This offers a version of the "Two Presidencies" hypothesis,[80] but the underlying mechanism is different. Here it is not constitutional prerogatives or the constellation of outside interests that divides domestic from foreign policy. Rather, the primary cause is the composition of policy preferences, and their loose affiliation with ideology and party identity.

Fourth, *expertise is institutional, and agency robustness gives officials their informational advantage*. We should expect that the tendency to politicize is strongest – and preference distance most causative – when officials reside in agencies that can produce independent, policy-relevant information. This is not strictly a matter of agency size. *Robustness* is defined by the portion of the agency (the number of positions) in excess of the layer of policy-determining positions. "Coordinating" agencies, such as the Domestic Council or the Council on International Economic Policy (under Nixon), are often held up as examples of presidential efforts to centralize. But such coordinating bodies possess little if any bureaucratic musculature beneath a cadre of decision makers. They have little capacity to generate policy-relevant information, and therefore do not confer informational advantage ("expertise") on officials residing within them.

Finally, as I stated at the outset, this study predominantly examines *retention* of officials, not appointment, in order to reveal patterns of politicization. This requires a granular dataset of tenure length for officials in the Nixon administration, and additional covariates (such as officials' experience, age, salary, et cetera) that may impact retention or tenure. It also necessitates a statistical approach, survival analysis, that is appropriate for handling potentially censored temporal data. The tenure dataset, covariates and methods are the subjects of the chapters to follow.

[80] A.B. Wildavsky, "The Two Presidencies," *Trans-Action/Society* 4 (1966); S.A. Shull, *The Two Presidencies: A Quarter Century Assessment* (Nelson-Hall Publishers, 1991); Brandice Canes-Wrone, William G. Howell, and David E. Lewis, "Toward a Broader Understanding of Presidential Power: A Reevaluation of the Two Presidencies Thesis," *The Journal of Politics* 70, no. 1 (2008), http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1017/s0022381607080061.

Chapter 2. Tenure of advisors and officials in the Nixon EOP, 1969-1974

On August 3, 1972, President Nixon, Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman and John Erlichman, Assistant for Domestic Affairs, sat gaming out the possibility of using the Internal Revenue Service's investigatory authority against administration opponents. White House counsel John Dean had already gone so far as to present IRS Commissioner Johnnie Walters with a list of individuals for a field investigation. Walters had brought the issue to Treasury Secretary George P. Shultz, who told him to inform Dean that all such requests had to be made through him. Nixon was furious at Shultz's resistance:

> One thing about Shultz – Shultz is not long for this life, because he's not being political enough. I don't care how nice a guy he is. I don't care how good of an economist he is. We can't have this bullshit.[81]

In fact, Nixon was wrong. Shultz, who became Labor Secretary two days after the Nixon presidency began and went on to serve as OMB director and Secretary of the Treasury, would last another twenty-one months after this Oval Office conversation was recorded. Shultz would resign just 63 days shy of Nixon's own departure, on August 9, 1974.

Despite an at times rancorous relationship with the president, Shultz proved a surprisingly resilient presence. Part of this survivability was owed to the fact that Nixon was wrong on a second count: Shultz was "political enough." An academic and political neophyte, he was scarcely known by Nixon when he was tapped for his first cabinet post, a move brokered by Nixon's close economic counselor, Arthur F. Burns. At the time friends and professional confidants warned him of the risks of political inexperience. Once at Labor, however, Shultz showed a formidable political acumen: He modernized the department's manpower administration, something his Johnson-era predecessor tried but failed to do; in what Shultz later described as his "first big battle in Washington," he and Assistant Secretary Art Fletcher launched the revised Philadelphia Plan, imposing racial hiring goals on construction unions receiving federal contracts. Both called for considerable political maneuver, including building bipartisan support in Congress.[82]

From early on it was clear that such maneuver did not mean tacking to presidential preference. At Labor, Shultz chaired Nixon's cabinet-level task force on oil import quotas; its final report called for "a substantial change in both the method and direction" of the president's preferred controls.[83] At OMB he worked against Nixon's proposed cuts in federal funding for elite universities, including the largest recipient and Shultz's alma mater, the Massachusetts Institution of Technology. At Treasury he

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[81] Michael Koncewicz, *They Said No to Nixon: Republicans Who Stood up to the President's Abuses of Power* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2018), 1.

[82] A.H. Raskin, "Said Nixon to George Shultz: 'I Track Well With You'," *The New York Times* (New York), August 23, 1970; George. Shultz, "George P. Shultz: Problems and Principles: George P. Shultz and the Uses of Economic Thinking.," interview by Paul Burnett, 2015.

[83] Vilma L. Kohn, "The Oil Import Question: Research, Report, Reaction," *Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law* 3, no. 1 (1970).

resisted the Nixon's attempts to deploy the IRS against political enemies, leading to the president's angry criticisms in the August 1972 conversation. This, along with Nixon's re-imposing price controls over Shultz's objections, led to Shultz's resignation in May 1974.[84]

As policy advisor and agent of executive authority, Shultz had fused the advantage, conveyed by expertise and access to information, with political adaptability. The result was a relationship with Nixon that was sometimes acrimonious but nonetheless durable. And we can describe its benefits as mutual. Shultz was not just retained. His portfolio within the administration grew, particularly once he was brought into the West Wing of the White House. It was a relocation that, even while (as Nixon explained at the time) it consolidated the president's control over the budget, strengthened Shultz's advisory presence overall.[85]

Nixon for his part did not get in Shultz a perfect "ally," in the sense of an agent who does not require costly monitoring.[86] Their policy disagreements make this clear. But Nixon found in Shultz an operator whom, in Nixon's comments in 1971, he "track[ed] well with," a bit of faint praise that suggests the complex give-and-take between the two, and the ambiguity in advisory relationships, in which a decision maker submits herself to the partial 'capture' by a better-informed subordinate.[87] There is more than a hint of bitter recognition in the passive construction – "Shultz is not long for this life" – as though Nixon thought himself unable to remove his Secretary directly.

George P. Shultz's career is one of a host of similar stories within the Nixon presidency. Many have been studied in detail. But while we may think of it as emblematic of the dynamic tension between advisors and presidents, we should take care not to generalize too much from it. The combination of expertise and political gamesmanship appeared to work in Shultz's case – but did it work for others? More importantly, how do expertise and political belief interact in this context more generally? When a president sets out to "control" figures like Shultz – what parameters help determine success or failure?

To get at these questions we may turn to a quantitative investigation that incorporates many alternative cases. While data-supported analyses are no longer the exception in the presidential subfield or in studies of politicization, they have typically focused on political appointment. However, the interaction between Nixon and Shultz not a story of appointment per se; the latter's selection owed more to accident than deliberate politicization. More important is Shultz's *survival* – his length of tenure, the politicizing pressures he faced over time, and how he negotiated them.

The first section of this chapter is a review and adaptation the logic of games of strategic information transmission, in particular operationalizing its two core concepts – policy preference and informational advantage. The second section then describes our dataset, of the policy preferences and tenure length of Nixon-era advisors. It describes

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[84] Koncewicz, *They Said No*; Shultz, interview.

[85] Shultz, interview.

[86] Jonathan Bendor and Adam Meirowitz, "Spatial Models of Delegation," *The American Political Science Review* 98, no. 2 (2004), http://www.jstor.org/stable/4145313; Gailmard and Patty, *Learning While Governing*.

[87] Raskin, "Said Nixon to George Shultz: 'I Track Well With You'."

how it was collected, and addresses important substantive and methodological concerns it may raise.

I. Does information insulate officials against politicization?

While *formal authority* – the right to select actions affecting part or the whole of an organization[88] – lies unequivocally with the president, *real authority* or effective control over decisions, is widely dispersed. This comes from the basic fact that the boss who has decision rights (or who can delegate them) generally has less information than her subordinates. Because of this the exercise of executive power is a shared enterprise. The president's subordinates wield power where they have none – at least in the formal sense. They leverage *informational advantage* to effectuate their preferred policies. And while presidents have the authority to make policy 'in the dark,' without relying on outside expertise, they are more likely to achieve their first-best outcomes if they do.

From strategic information perspective, two factors determine if the relationship between an advisor or official and the president is beneficial. The first is bias, or *closeness of policy preferences* between the advisor and the principal; the second is the *informational advantage* the advisor has over her principal. The most intuitive version of information advantage is expertise, drawn from an official's personal qualities – talents, intelligence, education level or technical knowledge, years of professional experience, and so on. For reasons laid out at the end of last chapter, however, information advantage is just as likely to come from institutional sources, for example, from the *robustness* of the unit or agency within which an advisor serves.

Interactions between bias and information advantage

An important question is how information interacts with bias. CS treat expertise as exogenous and binary – you either have it (the expert) or you do not (the principal). Under those conditions the *ally principle* follows: it is always better to consult or delegate to the official with a smaller bias.

In the real world, however, "expertise" is an institutional phenomenon and a *continuous quality*. Policy units or agencies with better resources will produce more of it than poorer-resourced ones. What happens when an official accesses comparatively *better* information? How does it influence presidential pressure to politicize?

One possibility is that it *exacerbates* it: Loyalty demands, and actions to marginalize or remove non-conformists will increase with the information gap. Not wanting to fall captive to an official or advisor's superior "insider" information, the president installs an official whose preferences more closely align with her own. A second possibility is that it *does nothing*. Bias is the controlling parameter, filtering all communications such that, despite having higher-quality information, a biased expert is

[88] Aghion and Tirole, "Formal and Real Authority."; Herbert A. Simon, "A Formal Theory of the Employment Relationship," *Econometrica* 19, no. 3 (1951), http://www.jstor.org/stable/1906815.

unable to express it effectively. A third possibility is that information *insulates* an official from loyalty demands.

Why would better information insulate an official? Dessein (2002) offers a model in which informational advantage is a function of the dispersion of the distribution of world states an expert can know.[89] The wider the *interval* of this probability distribution (and the higher its standard deviation), the more informational advantage the expert possesses, since the principal stands to lose more by selecting an uninformed policy. More importantly, a wider interval means that a greater range of bias can be informative. The conclusion is clear and intuitive: All else being equal, better-advantaged advisors can have higher biases relative to the principal and still communicate effectively.

While it is useful, Dessein's formulation begs an important question. How can we operationalize or measure this 'interval' – the standard deviation of the distribution over which the advisor has knowledge about the world? At heart these intervals are mathematical abstractions, and in the theoretical literature are treated somewhat arbitrarily. For example, for the sake of computability Crawford and Sobel pick a unit uniform distribution (i.e. uniform over $[0,1]$), with informative equilibria possible if bias $b < 1/4$). Similarly, Dessein selects an interval that can be easily parameterized and understood ($[-L, L]$, with informative communication possible if $b < L/2$).

Assessing informational advantage

In real world cases we cannot assess intervals directly. One possible workaround is to try to assess the scale of the 'world' over which the agency has policy responsibility. We may ask: Is an agency *generalist* in purpose or it is *specialized*? Does it provide information or recommendations on a set of policies with high levels of uncertainty and possible interdependences (e.g. NSC or OMB) or is it more narrowly tasked (e.g. CEQ or SAODAP)? The resulting claim is that generalist agencies, whose efforts are more diffuse, confer *less* informational advantage to their resident advisors than specialized ones, whose resources are more efficiently utilized.

A second, less intuitive way to measure the theoretical interval involves flipping the order of our concepts. Instead of saying that interval width represents informational advantage, we can infer the theoretic interval width from what we know about agency robustness. *Robust agencies* – those with bureaucratic resources apart from their policy-determining layer – will offer greater informational benefits to advisors than less-robust "coordinating" agencies. Officials serving within robust agencies will be able to observe and pick policies from a wider interval of world states.

All else equal, for a generalist agency to provide the same informational advantage to its advisor as a specialized one would require a higher degree of robustness. Specialist agencies meanwhile can do more with comparatively less. We can think of the informational advantage an advisor receives from his or her agency as some additive or multiplicative combination or weighted average over these measures, as summarized in Table 2.1. (In this case, we have assumed they average together and have omitted possible effects of personal advantage measures.)

[89] Dessein, "Authority and Communication."

Table 2.1. An advisor's informational advantage as a function of her agency; theoretic intervals and hypothesized pressures to politicize. Here we assume that better quality information *insulates* against politicization.

		Low robustness	***High robustness***
Generalist agencies	*Agency informational advantage:*	Low	Moderate
	Theoretic interval width:	Narrow	Moderate
	Hypothesized politicization pressures:	High	Moderate
	Examples:	WHO, Domestic Council, CIEP	NSC, OMB, cabinet agencies
Specialized agencies	*Agency informational advantage:*	Moderate	High
	Theoretic interval width:	Moderate	Wide
	Hypothesized politicization pressures:	Moderate	Low
	Examples:	OST, CEA	CEQ, SAODAP, OSRTN

Keeping the theoretic interval of world states in our model lets us hypothesize the role bias plays in an advisory relationship. Officials with low informational advantage – that is, who offer advice on choices over 'narrow' intervals – must be more aligned to their principal in belief or else be ignored, falling into an uninformative, babbling equilibrium. On the other hand where we see high informational advantage (i.e. a wider theoretic interval), advisor and principal can reach informative equilibria despite greater policy dissonance between them. In terms of politicization, we can put these possibilities as three testable claims:

1. *Exacerbation*. Specialization, agency robustness and other measures of information advantage strengthen the effect of bias on advisor survival.

2. *No effect*. Such measures of information advantage do not interact with bias.

3. *Insulation*. Politicizing pressures are at their height when an official's advantage is great enough to distinguish her from the president but no more. Beyond that, information advantage should *insulate* her against politicizing pressures.

Advisor effectiveness, tenure and survivability

Like intervals, the effectiveness of an advisory relationship – the potential 'payoffs' it brings to an advisor and her principal – cannot be measured directly. However, it is possible to infer it by looking at the *persistence of the relationship over time*. Effective relationships, yielding higher mutual payoffs in expectation, should survive longer (and bear less risk of departure, i.e.) than ineffective ones, *certeris paribus*.[90]

For the sake of simplicity we define advisory official tenure as the time an individual spends in a policy-determining role within the Executive Office of the President (EOP). This assumes that high-ranking EOP officials are likely to advise the president directly. We also include high-ranking figures outside the EOP whose role includes direct advice. This includes cabinet officials at the secretary or under- or deputy secretary level, and other outsiders who participate in EOP units or coordinating agencies (such as the NSC or Domestic Council).

We will not include informal, family or close personal advisors (such as Charles Rebozo or Bob Albplanalp, in Nixon's case). There is no easy reason for this. Canonical models do not distinguish between formal and informal advisors, since either can possess superior private information and policy bias. However, later models (particularly those involving delegation[91]), apply less well beyond a formal context. For our purposes, drawing advisors from the same context makes measurement easier and more consistent across observations.

There are two other elements that fall outside the scope of this study. First, we largely ignore an advisor's initial recruitment. How and why advisors enter the administration can clearly shape their subsequent success. The most important factor here is how closely her policy preferences align with the president. And while we will include it and other variables that influence recruitment – education level, party affiliation, prior government employment, role in presidential campaigns, etc. – our ultimate interest is their impact on an advisor's survivability afterward.

A second omission is the type of departure. Turnover studies commonly ask whether a departure is voluntary or involuntary, for example. During Nixon there were public firings (of Johnson-era OEO officials, for example) and resignations (Richardson and Ruckelshaus, e.g. after the 1973 "Saturday Night Massacre"). There were less public but nonetheless troubled departures. Advisors retired. Others were demoted or promoted into non-advisory positions. Many left voluntarily. At least two left and later returned.

While such details offer insights into those advisory relationships, including expert and presidential satisfaction, there are two reasons we will ignore departure type. First, as a variable, departure type is the downstream product of another phenomenon that

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[90] We can consider the expected utility of an advisory relationship here to be a latent mediator, such that determinants of utility we have already identified (informational advantage and policy preference) predict the expected utility of the advisory relationship, which then raises or lowers the risk for departure. For ease of interpretation, and at some risk of specification error, we will consider utility a complete mediator, such that there are no direct effects of these two determinants on advisor survivability. Tyler VanderWeele, *Explanation in Causal Inference: Methods for Mediation and Interaction* (New York: Oxford University Press,, 2015).

[91] Attila Ambrus, Eduardo Azevedo, and Yuichiro Kamada, "Hierarchical cheap talk," *Theoretical Economics* 8, no. 1 (2013); Dessein, "Authority and Communication."

interests us more – advisor effectiveness – for which tenure length is a more informative and continuous measure. Second, because information transmission models describe principal-expert relationships in terms of shared equilibrium outcomes, it may be hard to draw a bright-line distinction between voluntary and involuntary departures. Ultimately principal satisfaction matters most, but advisors receive utility too, by achieving or approaching their policy aims under constraint. Dissatisfaction with an ineffective relationship is likely to be experienced mutually, regardless of how participants may characterize it.[92]

II. Assembling the dataset: Policy preference

To construct the dataset I began with a list of individuals with official titles within the Nixon EOP during the years 1969-1974.[93] Additional sources provided names and positions for special assistants, counselors, and consultants within the White House Office and well as under- and deputy secretaries at the cabinet level.[94] The result was a master list of 398 individuals in the EOP and other relevant executive agencies.

Since policy preference distance or bias lies at the heart of the strategic information model, I began by assigning policy preferences to each individual. The greatest impediment to empirical research on cheap-talk and strategic information effects is the lack of measureable policy preferences for advisors and their principals. I proxy policy preference by using *ideology scores*, ideal-point estimates that are widely available, understood and validated.

These scores are commonly used for elective officials with roll-call histories. For EOP appointees and outside officials, most of whom have no such histories, I turned to the DIME database.[95] The DIME database comprises ideal-point estimates for contributors and recipients of campaign finance in the period 1979-2014. It has been repeated validated across studies.[96] Using public-source biographical information, I was able to identify CFscores more than two-thirds of all officials on the initial list.

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[92] We treat advisory departure as a *single endpoint* here, coding it as 1 if the advisor departs, 0 if the study ends before a departure. An alternative to single-endpoint analysis are *competing risks models*, in which a terminal event is coded according to its type (e.g. 0 for a non-observation, 1 for voluntary departure and 2 for involuntary). While such studies are robust and well understood, single-endpoint analysis is more common, straightforward, and sufficient to test our claims here.

[93] "Officials of the Nixon Administration," Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, accessed February 2018, https://www.nixonlibrary.gov/research-reference/officials-nixon-administration.

[94] Shirley Anne Warshaw, *Powersharing: White House-Cabinet Relations in the Modern Presidency*, SUNY series on the Presidency: Contemporary Issues, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996).

[95] Alternately known as the *common-space CFscore database*. Adam Bonica, "Database on Ideology, Money in Politics, and Elections," (Public version 2.0, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Libraries, 2016). <https://data.stanford.edu/dime>.

[96] Adam Bonica, "Are Donation-Based Measures of Ideology Valid Predictors of Individual-Level Policy Preferences?," *The Journal of Politics* 81, no. 1 (2018).

Using these scores is not without potential pitfalls. Not all scores are equally supported by underlying contribution data. Some are calculated from a small number of contributions, and those for individuals with single contributions are inferred from similar contributors. In at least one case, there was clear measurement error.

There are also issues of missingness and what Hill and Huber (2015) call the "upper class" bias of donor data.[97] The DIME database performs well for those with the will and money to make repeated contributions. Known figures, those with long public careers, and those who lived or remain in the Washington, D.C. area are well represented. Missing, however, are officials from the Johnson-Nixon OEO whose public careers continued in local or state agencies outside Washington. Missing as well are older figures who may have died without leaving a record of contribution. Finally, some individuals may have professional or personal reasons to *not* contribute (former intelligence officials, journalists or academics, e.g.), and therefore do not appear.

There are important substantive concerns as well. One is that individual ideology may be unstable over time. Thus individual scores taken in later periods may reflect changed beliefs; in our dataset there are at least two liberal scores that seemed likely to reflect a post-administration swing. Congressional research by McCarthy, Poole and Rosenthal, however, suggests that roll-call estimates are consistent over time, and that shifts in distributions are replacement, not conversion, effects.[98] Whether and how this applies to non-legislators is an open question, although elite-belief studies suggest time consistency.[99]

A second concern is that contributors tend to skew more extreme compared to the non-donating mass public. This means that missing ideal-point estimates in our dataset may lead our data to collect at the wings. These 'missing moderates' should not be too concerning, however. Huber and Hill's work compares contributors with non-contributors, finding the former, which they consider elites, to be older, richer and more polarized than the general population. Our missing observations, however, do not come from the general public but fall into a different category, of non-donating policy elites. And while (elite) donors may differ from (non-elite) non-donors, research suggests that belief among elites is largely consistent.[100]

Moreover, our analysis focuses on the *distance* between ideal-point estimates from the same elite cohort, not between elites and non-elites. Since most of our observations fall largely within the same party and within a similar score range (see Figure 2.1 below), we should not expect too significant an impact on our distance

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[97] Seth J. Hill and Gregory A. Huber, "Representativeness and Motivations of the Contemporary Donorate: Results from Merged Survey and Administrative Records," *Political Behavior* 39, no. 1 (2017).

[98] Nolan M. McCarty, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal, *Polarized America: The Dance of Ideology and Unequal Riches*, The Walras-Pareto Lectures, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006).

[99] Shoon Kathleen Murray and Jonathan A. Cowden, "The Role of "Enemy Images" and Ideology in Elite Belief Systems," *International Studies Quarterly* 43, no. 3 (1999), http://www.jstor.org/stable/2600938.

[100] M. Kent Jennings, "Ideological Thinking Among Mass Publics and Political Elites," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 56, no. 4 (1992), http://www.jstor.org/stable/2749200.

measures. More significantly, a visual comparison between our advisor CFscores and legislator ideology scores from the same period show that the scores we use here are consistent with roll call-based estimates (see Figure 2.2, below).

A more fundamental and potentially troublesome question is whether donor-based ideology measures can serve as a substitute for policy preference. After all, it is policy preference (i.e. bias) that is central to strategic information models, not ideology. Can the former be reasonably proxied by the latter? For years political psychologists have used surveys to relate generic beliefs to specific policy preferences, in the general public, among elites, and across policy domains.[101] One important finding is that generic beliefs relate to policy in a top-down hierarchy. Abstract values constrain generic postures or ideologies, which in turn constrain specific policy preferences.[102]

These results suggest that, in general, ideology may credibly substitute for policy belief. Roll-call-based scoring (like DW-NOMINATE) has the additional advantage that legislative votes by definition reveal an individual's policy belief. For donor-based estimates, however, the relationship between ideal points and policy preferences is less clear. Hill and Huber, for example, find that, within the same party, CFscore variation does not explain variation in policy preference, which they validate with survey work. A more thorough treatment of the same data in a response by Bonica, however, concludes the contrary – that CFscores strongly predict policy preference, even within the same party.[103]

Given the evolving research on donor-based ideology data, we should bear in mind their limitations here. Even if they are strongly predictive, such scores do not translate directly to policy belief, but affect the probabilities of an individual's support for a policy or bundle of policies. On the other hand, evidence of strategic information effects in models that utilize CFscores (such as ours here) can serve as indirect evidence that that these scores really do encode policy belief.

Figure 2.1 displays the percent of former Nixon-administration advisors, defined by those in EOP and related agencies, by range of CFscore, including a kernel density estimate (the solid curved line). The obtained scores show significant left- or conservative skewness (-1.219), leptokurtosis (3.4403) and slight bimodality. The long-dashed curved line provides an estimated normal curve for comparison.

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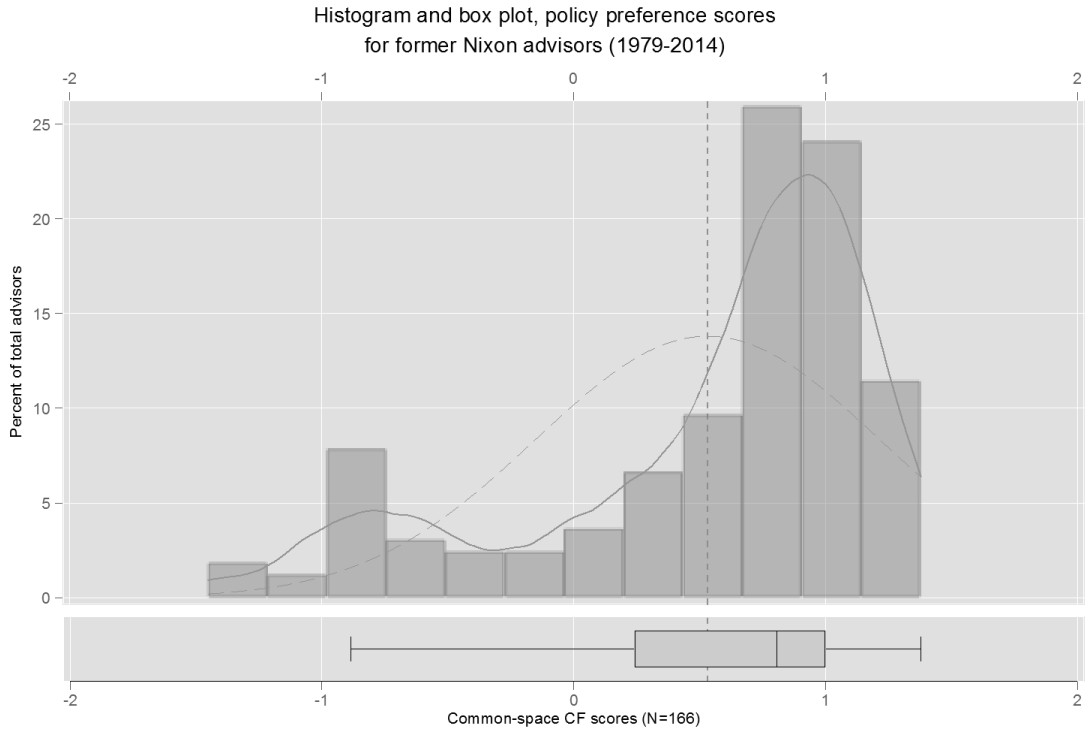
[101] Ole R. Holsti and James N. Rosenau, "The Domestic and Foreign Policy Beliefs of American Leaders," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 32, no. 2 (1988), http://www.jstor.org/stable/174046; Ole R. Holsti and James N. Rosenau, "The Structure of Foreign Policy Attitudes among American Leaders," *The Journal of Politics* 52, no. 1 (1990), http://www.jstor.org/stable/2131421.

[102] Brian C. Rathbun, "Hierarchy and Community at Home and Abroad: Evidence of a Common Structure of Domestic and Foreign Policy Beliefs in American Elites," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 51, no. 3 (2007).

[103] Adam Bonica, "Inferring Roll-Call Scores from Campaign Contributions Using Supervised Machine Learning," *American Journal of Political Science* 62, no. 4 (2018); Bonica, "Donation-Based Measures."

Figure 2.1.



CFscores range from -2, most liberal, to 2, most conservative. The mean CFscore obtained here (the vertical short-dashed line) is .5318 (SD=.681), with a median of .8045 (shown on the box plot) and a right-side or conservative mode at 1.013, which is close to the CFscore obtained for president Nixon himself (1.077).

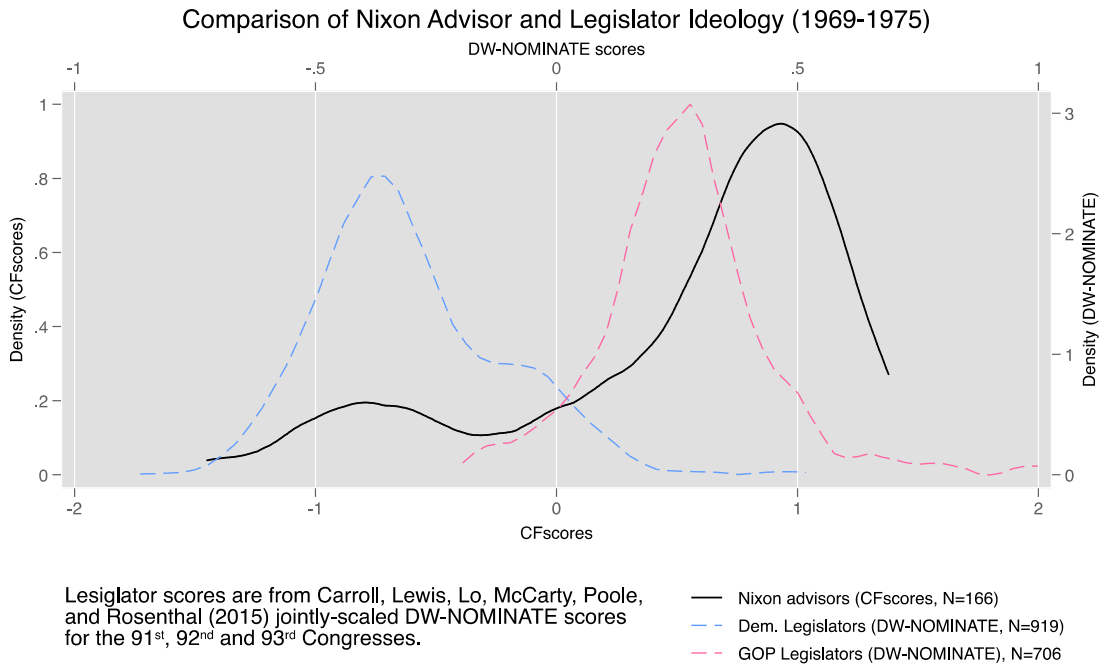
The upper quartile – a concentrated bloc of conservative Republicans – are those scoring near or above the presidential value, including appointments secretary Dwight L. Chapin (.997), Secretary of State William Rogers (1.269), counselor Anne Armstrong (1.229), Office of Economic Opportunity official Max Friedersdorf (1.236), security advisor Daniel I. Davidson (1.093) and presidential assistant Robert Ellsworth (1.037).

In the interquartile range above the median is a major concentration of what might be termed establishment Republicans, including OMB officials William Morrill (.809) and George P. Shultz (.878), Deputy Attorney General William Ruckelshaus (.827) and National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger (.791). In the interquartile below the median, between .239 and .8045, we find moderates, including aide Patrick Buchanan (.465), administration factotum Elliot Richardson (.476), Labor Secretary Peter J. Brennan (.394) and White House counsel Henry C. Cashen (.642). The lower or 'liberal' quartile contains our likely converts Bud Krogh (-.939) and Special Counsel Chuck Colson (-.833), Commerce Secretary (and self-described liberal Republican) Peter G. Peterson (-.883), and Nixon's advisor and Treasury Secretary John B. Connally (-.597), who switched from the Democratic party to the GOP in 1973.

While we expect conservative skew in data for a Republican president, its degree here may be somewhat surprising. It appears inconsistent with revisionist histories that

make the case for a moderate, or relatively liberal, Nixon presidency.[104] When we compare these advisor scores with similar ideology scores for legislators of the period, we can see just how conservative the administration is (Figure 2.2). [105]

Figure 2.2.



Here the modal GOP legislator (the red-dashed maximum on the right) is noticeably more moderate than the modal conservative advisor. Importantly, the Democratic legislator mode sits very close to the mode for our liberal advisor (the small 'hump' on the left-hand side).

Given these observations, and given that the DW-NOMINATE score for Nixon (.548) is close to his CFscore (1.077) when scaled, it is unlikely that the shape of our data results from measurement error or bias of donor data toward the extremes. Instead, our data concentrates near or slightly below our presidential ideology score. This distribution of scores is consistent with the starting-point of all strategic information models: That principal preferences matter, or more specifically here, that the roster of advisors in the administration reflects the president's policy beliefs.

Tenure length

I have argued that tenure within the EOP is a reasonable proxy for the effectiveness of an advisor-President relationship. Unfortunately, most publicly available information on

[104] Joan Hoff, *Nixon Reconsidered* (New York: BasicBooks, 1994).
[105] Royce Carroll et al., ""Common Space" DW-NOMINATE Scores With Bootstrapped Standard Errors," (Updated version, Sept. 2, 2015). https://legacy.voteview.com/dwnomin_joint_house_and_senate.htm.

advisors during the Nixon presidency gives tenure in years. (Even a small dataset of officials provided to this author by the Nixon Presidential librarians had predominantly yearly data.[106])

Year data are not nearly informative enough. They are interval-censored (i.e. we cannot know when in the recorded year an advisor starts or leaves) and do not allow us to treat tenure as a continuous measure. Instead *daily data* for individual entries and departures were compiled by hand for each advisor. I drew these from contemporaneous sources, particularly newspapers (and the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* in particular), presidential announcements (from the Nixon *Public Papers*, 1969-1975) and exit interviews. In a number of cases, Senate confirmation dates (where required for the position) were used, taken from the *CQ Almanac*, and several dates from internal administration documents. A partial bibliography is given at the end of this study, in Appendix A.

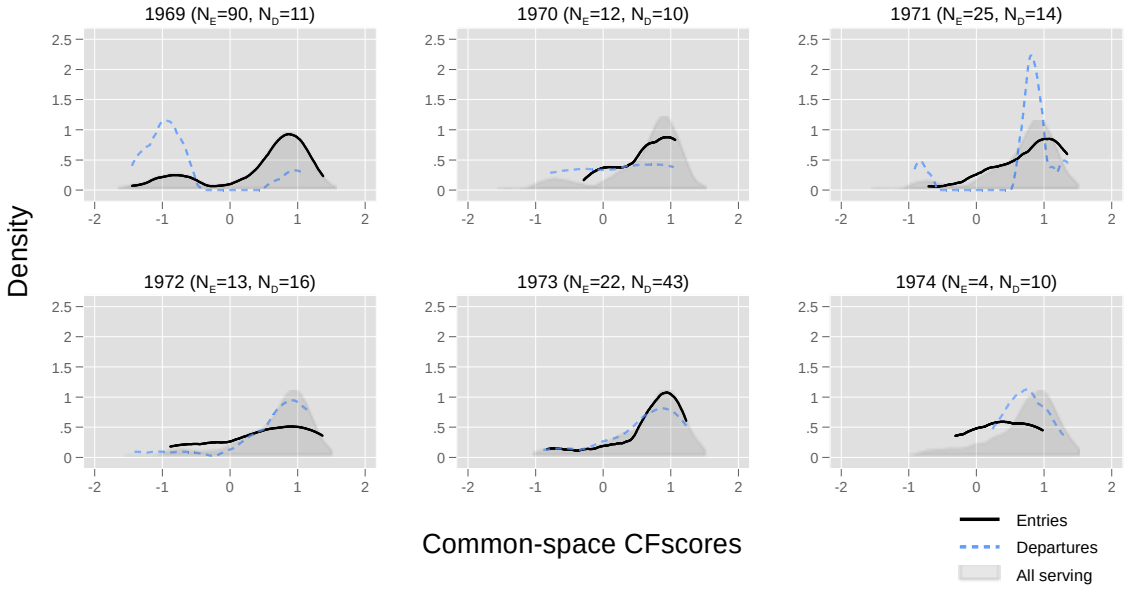
Sources frequently contained exact dates, especially for cabinet-ranked or other highly visible officials. In a few less visible cases dates had to be inferred (for example, from a news item about a different official switching into the same job). In one case arrival and departure days were estimated outright. Daily tenure-length data were assembled for 164 individuals, a little more than half of the initial list. Two individuals (James Keogh and Lawrence Eagleburger) departed early before returning. These are each treated as unique observations, bringing the total number of observations up to 166.

In a large portion of cases (62 of 166) the Nixon presidency ended before the official or advisor departed. We cannot accurately measure tenure length for these *right-censored* cases, since had Nixon stayed in office they may have survived longer. Since these are time-to-event data with right-censoring (see below), mean and median are calculated using the Kaplan-Meier estimator. Mean tenure length is 1201.64 days (SE=51.46) or 3.3 years, with a median of 1278 days (SE=129.76) or 3.5 years. The shortest non-censored tenure is 81 days. Eleven advisors serve the maximum or nearly the maximum period (2028 days). These enter with the president on January 20 or 21, 1969, and either leave when Nixon resigns on August 9, 1974, or are still in their position when he departs.

Combining these data with CFscores we can start to discern influence of ideology on the pattern of entry and departure for different years. Figure 2.3 shows kernel density estimates for entries (black lines) and departures (dashed blue lines) for each of the years between 1969-1974.

[106] Personal Communication, 2018.

Figure 2.3. Kernel estimates, advisor entries and departures (by year)



With the exception of 1974 most yearly arrivals resemble the overall distribution from Figure 2.1. First-year departures concentrate near the liberal hump or mode (this includes Johnson-administration holdovers), and later departures tend to concentrate near or slightly above the median of .8045. By 1974, this revolving door of advisors leads to an ideological distribution that shows no bimodality. By then liberals have largely left, a fact reflected in the yearly mean ideology for the whole dataset, which steadily grows more conservative, from .4414 (SD=.7555) in 1969 to .7059 (SD=.4957) in 1974.

Modeling advisor survival: the Cox proportional hazards (PH) model

To more thoroughly understand the relationship between Nixon and his advisors we can turn to regression analysis. In our case it is useful to think of advisor tenure as time-to-event or *survival data* – temporal periods bounded at the beginning and end by sharp, qualitative disjunctures – or in our case, entry and departure from an advisory position.[107]

We will consider the time period of our study (that is, the time during which we record observations) to be the calendar time of the Nixon administration: January 20, 1969 to August 9, 1974. These are reasonable bounds given this is the period in which

[107] Paul D. Allison, *Event History Analysis: Regression for Longitudinal Event Data*, ed. Sage University Papers, Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences, (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1984); Paul D. Allison, "Survival Analysis," in *The Reviewer's Guide to Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences*, ed. Gregory R. Hancock and Ralph O. Mueller (New York: Routledge, 2010); Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier and Bradford S. Jones, *Event History Modeling: A Guide for Social Scientists* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press,, 2004).

the principal (i.e. Nixon) is continuous, and during this period we can assume his preferences impact advisor survival.

Each of our observations begins when the advisor enters an advisory role, after which point they are considered 'at risk' of departure. The observation ends when they depart. As we have seen already, for 62 of our 166 advisors the study time ends before we record a departure. Right-censored observations like these pose a problem for multiple regression analysis, but are readily handled by event-history or survival models.[108] Here the analyst tries to assess the impact of a matrix of covariates on the *hazard rate*, which is formally expressed as:

$$h(t) = \lim_{\Delta t \to 0} \frac{\Pr(t + \Delta t > T > t | T > t)}{\Delta t} \tag{2.1}$$

Let T be a random variable denoting time to failure, and $h(t)$ the (limiting) probability that a failure occurs during the interval $[t, t + \Delta t]$, conditional on the subject surviving to the beginning of that interval. Survival models assess how this hazard – which we can loosely think of as the "intensity" with which our failure event (or departure) occurs[109] – is shifted up or down by a matrix of covariates, X_j, for a particular subject j:

$$h_j(t) = h_0(t)\exp(\beta_0 + \mathbf{x}_j\boldsymbol{\beta}_x) \tag{2.2}$$

The hazard faced by j at time t is the *baseline hazard*, $h_0(t)$, the hazard faced by all advisors, modified by some predictors (given by the row vector $\mathbf{x}_j$) and their regression coefficients (the column vector $\boldsymbol{\beta}_x$). A key problem for survival models is estimating the functional form of the underlying hazard, $h_0(t)$, misspecification of which can result in erroneous estimates. The most common way around this is to use the Cox model (1972):

$$h(t|\mathbf{x}_j) = h_0(t)\exp(\mathbf{x}_j\boldsymbol{\beta}_x) \tag{2.3}$$

The Cox model has the benefit that the baseline hazard is given no specific parameterization (with the intercept β_0 from the parametric model (2) subsumed into it). It is thus considered *semi-parametric*, and is most appropriate when our primary interest is covariate effects and not the nature of the baseline hazard or underlying impact of time on departure events. Although the baseline hazard is not specified, however, the Cox model assumes that whatever its shape it is same for every subject. Given subjects j and m:

$$\frac{h(t|\mathbf{x}_j)}{h(t|\mathbf{x}_m)} = \frac{\exp(\mathbf{x}_j\boldsymbol{\beta}_x)}{\exp(\mathbf{x}_m\boldsymbol{\beta}_x)} \tag{2.4}$$

[108] Allison, *Event History Analysis*.

[109] Mario Alberto Cleves, William Gould, and Yulia V. Marchenko, *An Introduction to Survival Analysis Using Stata*, Revised third edition. ed. (College Station, Texas: Stata Press, 2016).

This proportion is constant, provided that $\mathbf{x}_j$ and $\mathbf{x}_m$ are time-invariant. Equation 2.4 is known as the *proportional hazards assumption*. While non-proportionality can cause significant errors in estimation, there are a variety of diagnostics to test for it and techniques to deal with it, as there are for time-varying covariates (TVCs) as well. For these reasons the Cox model has become the dominant approach for event-history analyses, particularly in political science research.[110]

III. Core theoretical variables

Policy distance from the president

The hallmark of strategic information effects is that preference for a policy outcome determines the expected utility of communication about that policy. More precisely, it is the difference between what the principal wants and what the advisor wants, expressed as the distance between their ideal points. In our case, let $Dist_{\text{Pres}}$ be the absolute value of the difference between the CFscore for Nixon (1.077) and any advisor j's CFscore:

$$Dist_{\text{Pres}} = \left|CFscore_{\text{Pres}} - CFscore_j\right| \tag{2.5}$$

Our distance measures are thus a 'folded' dataset, with our original CFscores reflected across a vertical line at 1.077.[111] *Bias*, the term often to describe this distance, is always greater than or equal to zero, which is perfect alignment. We can see the results of folding our data in Figure 2.4, which also displays right-censored observations:

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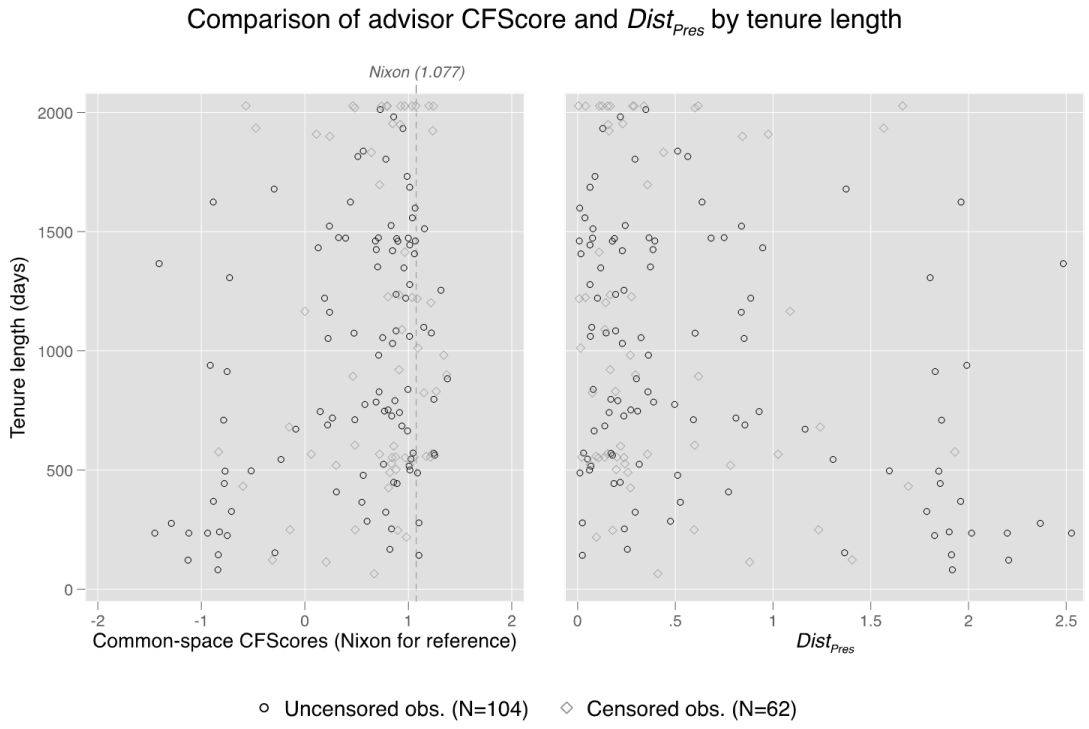
[110] Box-Steffensmeier and Jones, *Event History Modeling*.

[111] Where raw CFscores should be folded is not a trivial question. Using a different individual as a reference point yields different distance measures. These measures, taken from fixed points on the line, are linear transformations of each other and cannot be regressed together.

There is a possibility that the president is not the relevant reference point. Preference could be measured relative to *another official*, such as chief of staff Bob Haldeman or National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger (Hult and Walcott 2004; Kimball 1998). While testing for Kissinger is feasible, testing the influence of the chief of staff is more complicated: We have data for Alexander Haig (Chief of Staff from 1973-1974), but Haldeman is missing. We might proxy him through his personal aide, Alexander Butterfield (.704), or generalize from members of his notorious "beaver patrol" for which we have data – Chapin, Higby and Ziegler – but the theoretical justification for this is less than clear. See, Hult and Walcott, *Empowering the White House*.

Ultimately, while we cannot rule out alternative sources of power or influence entirely, we will rely on the conventional measure – distance from presidential CFscore – that is backed by both theory and evidence.

Figure 2.4.



Advisors' informational advantage: Personal advantage measures

To assess how an advisor's personal qualities impart an informational advantage, I include variables conventionally associated with human capital investment: years of experience measured in calendar age and level of education. For the former, I have advisor age when they first enter the study by taking an advisory position (what in epidemiology is often termed the "baseline age"). The mean age of the advisors in our dataset is 43.02 years (SD=9.324) with a median age also of 43. This is much younger than Nixon, who took office having just turned 56, although the cohort that is ideologically close to the president (e.g. above the lower bound of the interquartile range) skews older. And perhaps contrary to conventional thinking, the more liberal range of advisor scores shows no correlation with age.[112] To measure educational attainment I include indicator variables for higher educational attainment: whether an advisor has a Ph.D., a law degree, or is Ivy-league educated.

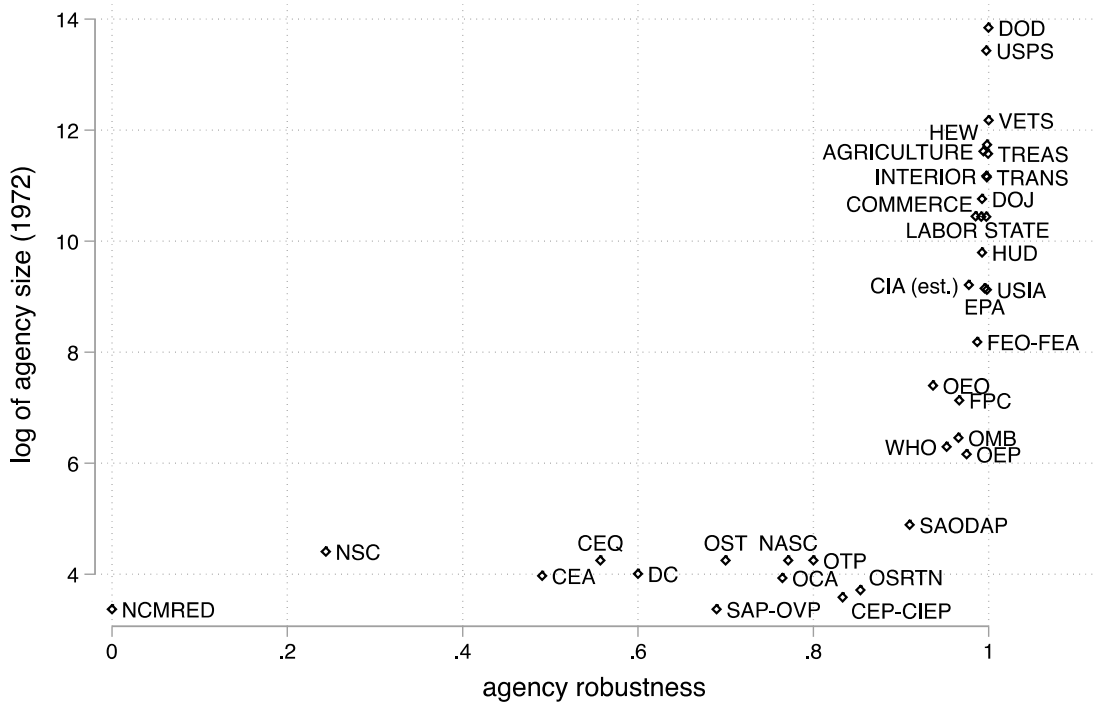
Agency advantage: Robustness

The informational advantage conferred by an advisor's agency is calculated for each EOP policy unit as well as for cabinet agencies. The first key metric here is what I term

[112] In four of our 166 cases linear interpolation was used to supply missing ages. These were predicted by regressing age on CFscore and the indicator for participation in the 1968 campaign.

agency *robustness*, given by the proportion of overall positions in an agency that are not either policy-determining or directly supporting policy development.[113] This provides a measure of an agency's information-producing and implementing capacity, and quantitatively distinguishes coordinating bodies (like Nixon's Domestic Council) from medium- and large-size full-service bureaucracies. To measure this, I first took each unit's size (provided in the OPM's Annual Report of 1972) and subtracted out the policy-determining and support positions in each agency or policy unit. (Numbers for these positions came from several sources: the Plum Book of 1968 and 1972, and a 1972 Congressional report on the growth of the EOP.[114]) Dividing this difference by the agency's total size gives a continuous measure ranging from 0 to 1. Figure 2.5 displays resulting robustness scores over their size. Their relationship appears nearly exponential.

Figure 2.5. Agency robustness relative to size. Robustness is measured by the proportion of non-policy-determining positions in the agencies in our dataset. Y-axis is the log of agency size, measured in 1972. CIA measure was estimated; in similar cases, where information was not available, precursor or similar agencies were used. This is shown by hyphenated labels. (The exception is SAP-OVP, the Office of the Vice President.)



This robustness measure captures the distinction between coordinating agencies (such as the NSC, DC and CIEP), which are primarily arranged along the horizontal, and larger

[114] Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, A Report on the Growth of the Executive Office of the President 1955-1973; Prepared Under the Direction of Congressman Morris K. Udall, (Washington, D.C.: U.S Government Printing Office, 1972).

executive agencies, concentrated vertically along the right side. At the elbow (between .8 and 1) we see small and middle-sized agencies with substantial bureaucratic resources of their own; these include the White House Office (WHO), the OMB, the Special Action Office for Drug Abuse Prevention (SAODAP), and the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO).

There are three concerns in using these scores: First, including cabinet officials among our advisors creates a potential problem – cabinet agencies, USIA and CIA all had similar robustness measures of nearly 1 (as did the large EOP units and independent agencies: OEO, e.g. and FPC). To help distinguish cabinet from non-cabinet agencies, I include a dummy for cabinet officials. Second, to control for confounding effects of agency size, I included a (log) size variable. Finally, many advisors work within more than one agency. In these overlapping or multi-serving cases, I gave the advisor the score of the most-robust agency in which they served. (The same was done for the largest agency in which they served.)

Agency advantage: Policy Scope

The second measure of agency advantage is the scope of policy. To give a policy-scope measure for each advisor, I started by coding each agency as either a specialized or generalist. Choices here are subjective, but I based them on four qualities: First, how specific are the responsibilities of the agency when it was established? The policy scope of an agency is generally given by the legislation, presidential statement, memorandum or executive order establishing it. The Council on International Economic Policy (CIEP), for example, is created to give "a clear top level focus for the full range of international economic policy issues; deal with international economic policies—including trade, investment, balance of payments, finance—as a coherent whole."[115] By contrast, SAODAP is created in part to centralize a relatively narrow policy purpose – the prevention of drug abuse – under a single director.[116]

Second, are agencies created through the integration of other, specific agencies, or are they decomposed into more specific agencies or units later on? For example, at its creation the Domestic Council absorbs the responsibilities of the Council for Urban Affairs, the Cabinet Committee on the Environment and the Council for Rural Affairs.[117] By contrast, the Office of Science and Technology (OST) is abolished in 1973, with its

[115] Richard M. Nixon, "Memorandum Establishing the Council on International Economic Policy. January 19, 1971," in *Richard Nixon: 1971: Containing the public messages, speeches, and statements of the president.* (Ann Arbor, Michegan: University of Michegan Library, 1972; reprint, 2005).
[116] Executive Office of the President [Richard Nixon] United States, "Executive Order 11599 — Establishing A Special Action Office For Drug Abuse Prevention," (Federal Register, June 19, 1971).
[117] Executive Office of the President [Richard Nixon] United States, "Executive Order 11541 — Prescribing the duties of the Office of Management and Budget and the Domestic Council in the Executive Office of the President," (Federal Register, July 1, 1970).

national-security and research responsibilities given to the NSC and the National Science Foundation respectively.[118]

Third, must appointees meet expertise or educational requirements? Both the Council of Economic Advisors and the Council on Environmental Quality require officials with credentialed expertise; this suggests a more specific range of responsibilities.[119] Fourth, do they have a high composition of multi-serving or overlapping officials? Overlap, like that which we see in Nixon's Domestic Council, suggests that policy discussed or originated within the agency is general enough to involve otherwise unrelated units. Finally, cabinet agencies are considered generalist. Otherwise specific unit scores are given at the end of the chapter.

Individual advisors are scored with a binary indicator. As with agency robustness, officials who serve in multiple agencies are scored according to their highest level of information advantage. Thus they score 1 if they belong to any specialist units and 0 otherwise.

Agency competence

Finally, I assessed the competence of each agency, measured by the percentage of policy-determining positions filled with non-political appointees.[120] Using the Plum Book of 1968 and 1972, I totaled the number of leading and support positions that were political in nature. These were defined by appointment type and pay grade: For political positions I included presidential appointees subject to Senate confirmation (PAS); those that were president-appointed without confirmation (PA); excepted positions (PL), Schedule C and Non-career Executive Assignment (NEA) positions. [121] With the exception of PAS and NEA appointments, to be included positions had to receive pay according the executive

[118] Richard M. Nixon, "Reorganization Plan No. 1 of 1973," (Federal Register, July 1, 1973).

[119] David E. Lewis and Jennifer L. Selin, *Sourcebook of United States Executive Agencies*, 1st ed. (Washington, D.C.: Administrative Conference of the United States, Office of the Chairman,, 2012), http://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo37402.

[120] David E. Lewis, "The Politics of Institutionalizing the Presidency: Neutral versus Responsive Competence in the Executive Office of the President" (Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, August 29-September 1, 2002 2002).

[121] Eisenhower created Schedule C as a "class of federal employee who was directly responsible to the president, outside the civil service and yet not subject ot advice and consent by the Senate." Gailmard and Patty, *Learning While Governing*, 126. NEA positions were created by President Johnson in 1966, with the express goal of "extending and adapting merit principles in recruitment, selection, and development, combined with improvements in the identification, assignment and utilization of key personnel." Executive Office of the President [Lyndon Johnson] United States, "Executive Order 11315 — Amending the Civil Service Rules to authorize an Executive Assignment System for positions in grades 16, 17, and 18 of the General Schedule," (Federal Register, November 17, 1966).

or so-called "supergrade" schedules.[122] Summing these and dividing by the total number of leading and support positions, provides a competence measure ranging from 0 to 1. Again, officials serving multiple agencies were given their highest competence score, and I included an indicator variable for officials or advisors with public-service careers prior to appointment.

The variables above – policy preference distance, personal information advantage measures and agency advantage measures (policy scope, robustness, and competence) – constitute our core theoretical variables. For the agency measures used in this analysis, see Appendix B.

IV. Other contributors to departure risk

To avoid specification error we also collected measures on other possible predictors. Of these the first, policy domain, is, as we will see, the most likely contender for inclusion with those variables previously mentioned into a complete theory-driven model. Others given below will be considered 'control' variables.

Policy domain (foreign or domestic)

An important claim in presidential studies is that there are "two presidencies."[123] Presidents exercise power differently when conducting foreign versus domestic policy, and power is at its zenith in foreign affairs. While the two presidencies thesis is not a direct concern here, we ask whether this distinction of policy domain influences the giving and receiving of advice. The strategic information literature provides no rationale for distinguishing among such functions or domains of policy expertise. However, we can think of domestic and foreign policy domains as each defined by a set of general conditions that differ, and which interact with the logic of strategic communication.

There is no easy way to theorize the precise nature of that interaction because, from an informational point-of-view, we can characterize these domains in equally credible but opposing ways. For example, we might suspect that advisors working in foreign policy have more informational advantage than domestic advisors, since foreign affairs involves highly-specialized if not arcane knowledge, complex policy interdependencies and uncertain implications for domestic politics. Experts should therefore be mostly immune from the dynamics of 'politics' or policy preferences. On the other hand, in the context of ongoing engagements, such as the war in Vietnam, policy might be sufficiently routinized to involve a narrow band of incremental or easily-

[122] "Policy-determining" positions, whether political or not, were nearly all paid at supergrade or above; see Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, Short A Report on the Growth of the Executive Office of the President 1955-1973; Prepared Under the Direction of Congressman Morris K. Udall. Excluded from calculations were Schedule A, B, lower-grade C or PL positions, and agency-specific exempted (PL) positions, which were by-and-large competitive.

[123] Wildavsky, "The Two Presidencies."

calculated choices. In this case advantage would be low and policy consensus more salient.

Overall, given Nixon's reassessment of Vietnam, however, his broad rethinking of détente and embrace of an ideologically fluid strategic posture,[124] we predict that the former is largely true, and that foreign-policy expertise provides insulates against policy dissonance. To test this, I use an indicator variable (1 is an advisor is part of any foreign-policy unit or agency, 0 otherwise) as an interaction term. It is considered alone as a main-effect variable. This is to address confounding, but is of perhaps less theoretical importance. Our question is not to see if foreign policy expertise by itself has consequence (and the Kaplan-Meier survival estimates suggest it may not; see Figure 3.4 below). Our concern is whether and how it interacts with our other theoretically-grounded predictors, preference and competence.

Start year, the 1968 campaign and Johnson-era holdovers

Advisors that enter as part of the transition team usually have a strong rapport with the president. In many cases these relationships begin years before in personal or political interactions or on previous campaigns. Starting early in a presidency also provides an advisor with the chance to establish themselves as a reliable source of advice. Given limited presidential time and attention this can equate to cornering presidential attention.

We predict a path dependence here – that departure risk for early entrants to be lower than those coming later into the EOP. We measure this by the number of days to entry, taken from January 20, 1969, converted to years for ease of interpretation. In order to assess the importance of campaign service, we use an additional indicator, 1 for those advisors who served in Nixon's 1968 presidential campaign, 0 otherwise. Early-serving advisors may be vulnerable, however, when they are held over from the previous administration. Research suggests that presidents and administration officials work hard to eliminate personnel, especially if the prior administration is from the other party. Here we use an indicator variable – 1 for Johnson-era holdovers, 0 for non-holdovers.

Serving in more than one agency

Forty-two of our 166 observations are advisors who serve on more than agency. Eleven advisors serve on four or five. We predict that such multi-serving advisors – who are more likely to have a presidential audience, greater responsibilities and potential control over the policy agenda – will have lower risk of departure than those serving in one agency. We include a variable for the number of agencies in which each advisors serves.

Personal economic motivations: Salary and opportunity costs

[124] John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy During the Cold War*, Rev. and expanded ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

Research generally points to non-monetary motivations for those in public service, including altruistic intentions or value congruence between individuals and organizations.[125] While unlikely to be determinative, level of pay, or the lure of outside employment, may raise or lower an advisor's commitment to her position. To test the impact of this I have included two measures: The first is each advisor's yearly salary. The second is an opportunity-cost measure given by the ratio of the salary of comparably skilled private-sector employment, to an advisor's governmental pay.

Salaries or pay-grades for many EOP officials are given in the Plum Book or the "A Report on the Growth of the Executive Office of the President 1955-1973." In cases where data were missing, pay was inferred from comparable officials. Calculating salaries for outside employment involved two steps: first, to determine the industry an advisor would likely enter when leaving (law, academia, science, foreign service, management, media and communications, etc.), then to compile pay estimates for these industries based on experience or grade. After the passage of the Federal Pay Comparability Act of 1970, the Bureau of Labor Statistics made an effort to match public-sector pay with comparably skilled private-sectors jobs. Occasional reports allow comparison across public and private sector work in some occupations.[126] For other occupations pay was estimated using BLS yearly reports.

Advisors, like Defense Secretary David Packard, for whom the 'outside option' involved personal fortunes or CEO-level pay, neither of which are generally reported, were given an arbitrary high opportunity-cost ratio. Career civil servants, for whom there is no real private-career alternate, were given a ratio of 1. The resulting ratios range from .335, in which government salary is three-times higher than the private option, to 2, in which the private salary is twice as great. I also include a binary indicator for those who would likely seek private-sector jobs as an alternative – in the words, non-career civil service employees.

Presidential priority measures

Another potential influence on advisor survival is whether they serve in an agency that is prioritized (or de-prioritized) by the president. One way to assess presidential interest in an agency is to measure whether an agency's budget is increasing or decreasing over the administration. I measured percentage change in budget for each agency between 1970 and 1973, using *The Budget of the United States Government* (BOB/OMB 1969-1973) as the primary source. For several units (the CIEP, OEO and FPC) budgets were given by

[125] James L. Perry, Annie Hondeghem, and Lois Recascino Wise, "Revisiting the Motivational Bases of Public Service: Twenty Years of Research and an Agenda for the Future," *Public Administration Review* 70, no. 5 (2010), http://www.jstor.org/stable/40802365; James L. Perry and Lois Recascino Wise, "The Motivational Bases of Public Service," *Public Administration Review* 50, no. 3 (1990), http://www.jstor.org/stable/976618; Leonard Bright, "Does Public Service Motivation Really Make a Difference on the Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intentions of Public Employees?," *The American Review of Public Administration* 38, no. 2 (2008).

[126] See, e.g., Mark S. Sieling, "Occupational salary levels for white-collar workers, 1982," *Monthly Labor Review* 105, no. 10 (1982), http://www.jstor.org/stable/41841702.

Congressional sources.[127] Advisors were scored with the largest (positive) change among agencies in which they served.

Three other priority measures were included here as well. The first is for units created by Nixon himself. This includes units such as OMB (from the BOB), the Domestic Council, the Council on International Economic Policy, and the offices of Telecommunications Policy and Consumer Affairs. We assume that these units will be high priority. Second, units that are casualties of Nixon's 1973 Reorganization Plans, including the Office of Science and Technology, the Office of Emergency Preparedness and the National Aeronautics and Space Council, are assumed to have low policy priority. Binary indicators are included for both types of unit. Finally we consider advisors whose positions require Senate confirmation (PAS). Coordination outside the executive demands relatively more attention, energy or priority on the part of the president and team. Because of these 'investments', we expect them to have lower risk of departure, and we have included a binary indicator for PAS positions.

Agency indicators

To control for otherwise unmeasured fixed effects of agencies themselves, we include indicators for each. A 1 indicates an advisor served within the unit, a 0 otherwise. These are not dummy variables, since there is overlapping membership. In a few cases unit indicators had very high pairwise correlation with other predictors (e.g. the indicators for agencies created after 1969, and for agencies impacted by the 1973 reorganization), and at least two agencies (the Federal Energy Office and the Office of Telecommunication Policy) had too few observations to produce estimates. In such cases, models were estimated separately.

Watergate

Finally, in order to assess the impact of the Watergate scandal on advisor survival, we include a time-varying indicator variable. Any portion of an advisor's tenure that extends into the Watergate period is coded as 1, with portions falling before it coded as 0. While the scandal can be traced to the Watergate Hotel break-in and arrests of June 17, 1972, given the extreme secrecy of administration figures involved its general impact on advisors would not likely be felt until later. I have chosen the start of televised hearings by the Senate Watergate Committee, on May 17, 1973, as the point after which advisors are undeniably operating in the context of Watergate.

[127] For example, the CIEP budget is alluded to in: Report (to Accompany S. 1636): To Amend the International Economic Policy Act of 1972, Report No. 93-190, 93rd Congress; 1st Session 1-3 (June 4, 1973 1973).

Chapter 3: Patterns of politicization in official retention

Last chapter laid out our tenure-length dataset, variables and the statistical methodology, survival analysis, that is most appropriate approach for data that measure time to a failure or 'death' event (i.e. advisor departure) with censored observations. In this chapter we present our results. We do so in two ways: The first are non-parametric estimates of survivor functions for various groups defined by the covariates in our data. Comparing survivor functions allows us to test some basic claims about our data, including the effect of advisor policy preference and competence. However, it is a usually considered a first step toward estimating more meaningful parametric or semi-parametric models. In this chapter's latter half we will estimate several semi-parametric Cox proportional hazards models, and explore our results in detail.

I. Kaplan-Meier survival estimates

Before turning to model specification, it is useful to provide a descriptive overview of our data. The most common starting place is to use a Kaplan-Meier estimate of the *survivor function*, $S(t)$, which in our case is the probability that an advisor survives past time t. Let us assume that an advisor's tenure is the observed value of the random survival-time variable T (from equation (1) above) whose distribution is described by the probability density function $f(t)$. The probability that a death occurs before t is therefore

$$F(t) = \int_0^t f(u)du\,, \tag{3.1}$$

and the survivor function, or probability of survival past t, is

$$S(t) = 1 - F(t)\,. \tag{3.2}$$

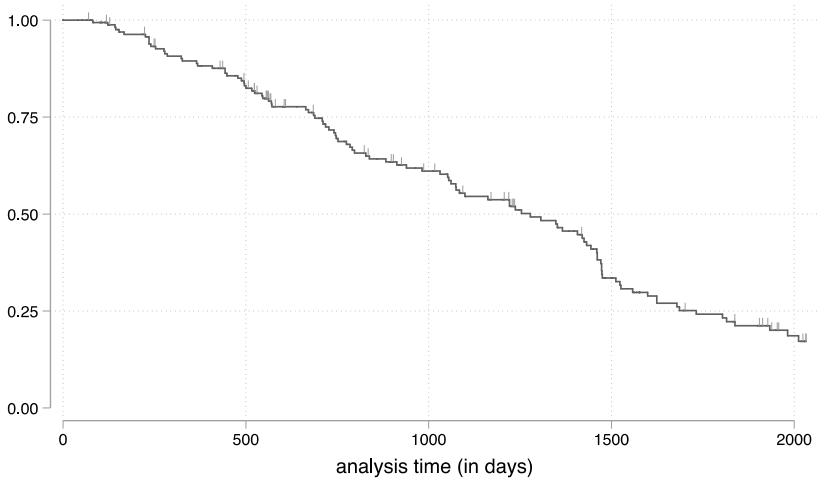
This is most often estimated using the product-limit, or Kaplan-Meier estimate:

$$\hat{S}(t) = \prod_{j|t_j \le t} \left(\frac{n_j - d_j}{n_j}\right) \tag{3.3}$$

Here n_j is the number of individuals who are at risk at any time t_j, which falls between an interval defined as the period between distinct failure times.[128] During an interval survival probabilities are constant, and then decrease with each failure. The result is a step function as shown in Figure 3.1. Here we see the survivor function for all advisors (not adjusted for any covariates). Right-censored observations, incorporated into the Kaplan-Meier estimation, are indicated here by tick marks.

[128] For a thorough treatment see, David Collett, *Modelling Survival Data in Medical Research*, 3rd ed., Chapman & Hall/CRC Texts in Statistical Science Series, (Boca Raton, FL: Chapman & Hall/CRC, 2015).

Figure 3.1. Kaplan-Meier estimate of survivor function for Nixon officials and advisors (1969-1974)



Meaningful comparison across groups or data subsets is also possible using Kaplan-Meier estimates, with differences between groups tested using a log-rank test. Figure 3.2 presents estimate comparisons for policy preference ($Dist_{Pres}$) and our non-personal theoretical variables: agency robustness, policy scope (specialist versus generalist), and cabinet-level position. Continuous variables have been recast as factor variables or dummies: $Dist_{Pres}$ is given in increments of 1, while agency robustness is given as below or above the median robustness measure. Also shown are log-rank test estimates for each comparison. (P-values given here represent the strength of evidence against the null hypothesis of no group difference.)

Figure 3.2.

Pol. pref. distance (***P* = 0.000**) Agency robustness (***P* = 0.087**) Policy scope (***P* = 0.000**) Cabinet position (*P* = 0.521)

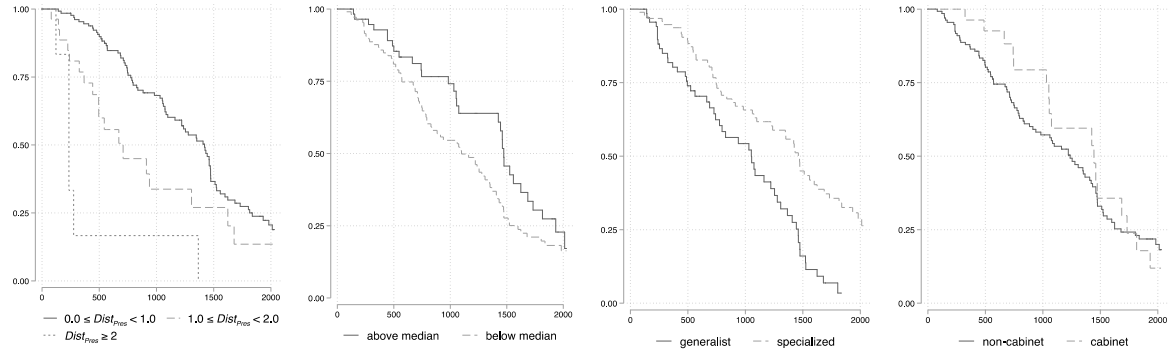
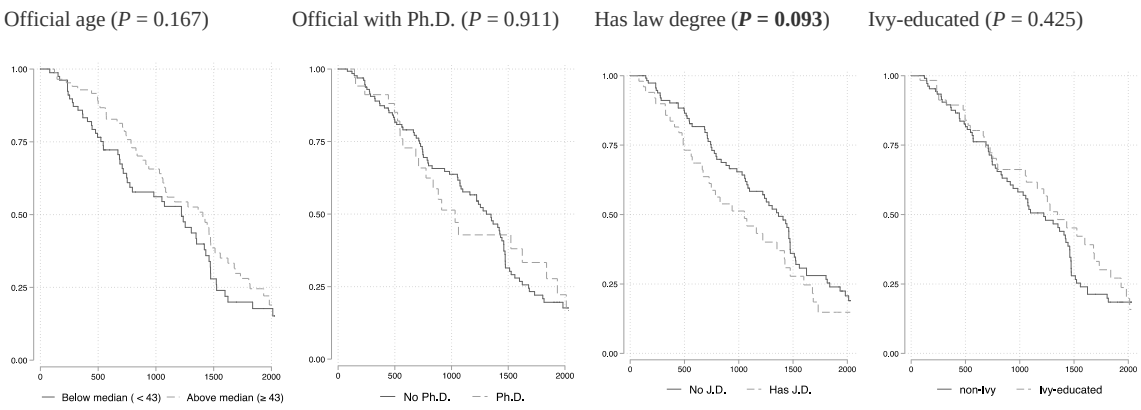


Figure 3.3 presents Kaplan-Meier survivor estimates for our personal theoretical variables: baseline age, here separated into groups above and below the median age of 43), advance degree type (Ph.D., J.D.), and Ivy-league education.

Figure 3.3.



Figures 3.4 and 3.5 present the policy domain variable. Figure 3.4 shows the policy domain indicator by itself, which is not statistically different from the null hypothesis ($P = 0.798$). I have hypothesized, however, that foreign policy may be more meaningful in interaction with our other theoretical variables. While regression modeling provides more robust tools to estimate interaction effects, non-parametric estimates can offer preliminary insights, between an indicator variable (policy domain, e.g.) and other important predictors (policy preference and agency robustness). In Figures 3.5.a-b I have divided my dataset into foreign policy and domestic advisors, and have estimated survivor functions by policy preference distance and agency robustness for each subgroup.

Figure 3.4. Kaplan-Meier survivor estimates by policy domain. ($P = 0.798$)

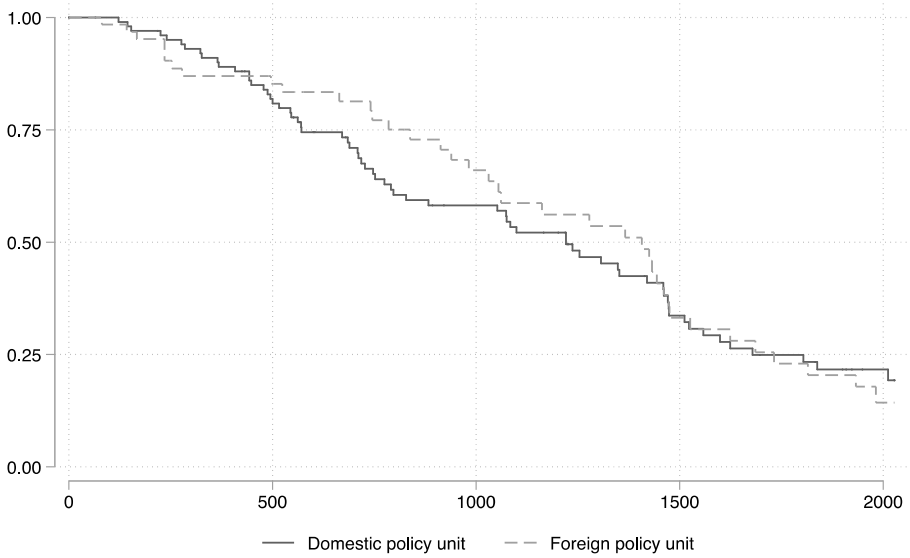


Figure 3.5.a. Policy preference distance

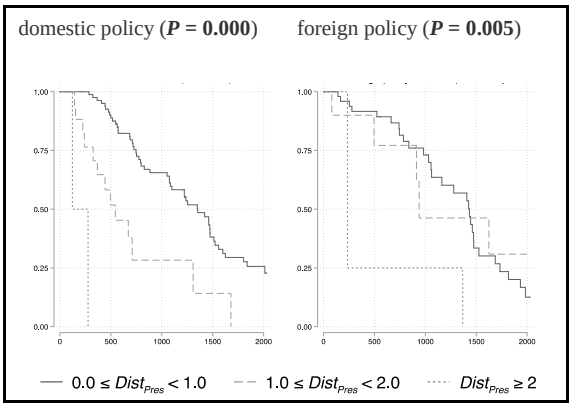
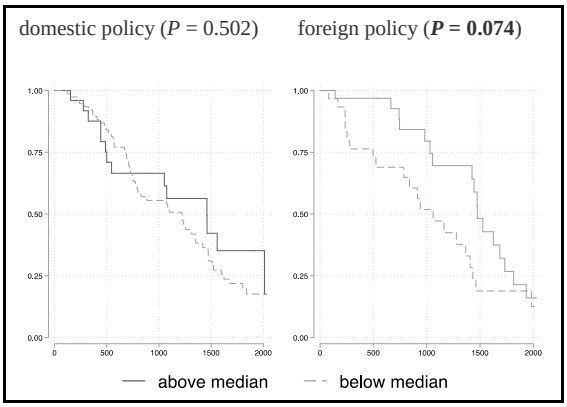


Figure 3.5.b. Agency robustness



Such non-parametric survival estimates are useful, but we must bear in mind that those given here are not adjusted for other covariates. We should consider these largely descriptive, therefore, and not a substitute for a semi-parametric or parametric models. Subgroup estimations for domestic and foreign-policy advisors (Figures 3.5.a-b) is especially inefficient, although the results are more intuitive than, for instance, stratifying our estimates on policy domain.[129] And recasting continuous variables as factor or dummy variables leads to a significant loss of information.

Despite these limitations, Kaplan-Meier estimates shed light on relationships among groups in our dataset, and point to potential choices in variable selection later. Among our theoretical variables, for example, we find that differences among groups defined by policy preference distance (or the factor-variable version of it) are highly significant. Advisor subsets with higher levels of bias have correspondingly lower survivability (resulting in steeper downward-sloping curves). Two other theoretical variables – agency robustness and policy scope – affect survival in the direction we have proposed, although the difference in survival brought by higher agency robustness is weakly significant ($p < .10$). Also weakly significant is having a law degree ($P = 0.093$).

Finally while the policy domain indicator itself has no effect on advisor survival, it does appear to condition the impact of other variables. Among foreign policy advisors, for example, policy preference distance, or bias, has a significant effect on the survival function once it is large. While log-rank test for difference between groups with small ($0 \leq Dist_{Pres} < 1$) and medium ($1 \leq Dist_{Pres} < 2$) preference distances is not significant ($P = 0.813$) for domestic advisors the same log-rank test is highly significant ($P = 0.000$).

In other words, foreign policy advisors are *relatively insulated* from the effects of preference distance, but domestic advisors are not. Moreover, we see that agency robustness, while significant in the full dataset, is not significant when we estimate only for the domestic subgroup. In the domain of foreign policy, by contrast, robustness matters ($P = 0.074$), and in the direction we have predicted. This and other non-parametric findings presented here are suggestive, but may or may not stand up when

[129] Collett, *Modelling Survival Data*; Cleves, Gould, and Marchenko, *Survival Analysis Using Stata*.

adjusted for other covariates. For this more robust and detailed assessment we turn to Cox regression.

II. Cox regression results

Three basic principles guide our model specification. The first are theoretical concerns. The theory variables given in the previous chapters – policy preference, robustness, specialization, agency competence and policy domain – are given priority. Theory and our non-parametric evidence also suggest that interactions, especially among our theoretical variables, are essential to advisor longevity. These are prioritized as well. The second is interpretability. Survival regressions can present challenges to interpretation, particularly when covariates are interacted; easing understanding implies parsimony in modeling and visualization results. Finally, we must be concerned with model efficiency. This entails paying attention to the number of variables we include, but also how we address group effects, either through stratification, use of robust errors or both.[130]

Control variables

Handling control variables requires somewhat a more exploratory approach. To select control predictors, I estimated a *trimmed controls* model via a stepwise process, including variables based on likelihood-ratio tests at the $p < .15$ level. Results are presented in Table 3.1, including hazard ratios and confidence intervals for each variable and the *Aikake Information Criterion* (AIC) for the model. I also present an additional summary measure of model agreement, given by $-2 \log \hat{L}$, where $\hat{L}$ is maximum partial likelihood for the model.[131].

Interpreting results for Cox regression may not seem straightforward at first. Let us rewrite the Cox model (Eq. 2.3) in scalar form, for a subject j with covariates $x_{1j}, x_{2j}, \dots, x_{kj}$,

$$h(t|x_{1j}, x_{2j}, \dots, x_{kj}) = h_0(t)\exp(\beta_1 x_{1j} + \beta_2 x_{2j} + \cdots + \beta_{kj} x_{kj}). \qquad (3.4)$$

If we have a second subject m, this time with the covariate x_{2m} incremented by 1, the ratio of the hazards for the two subjects reduces to $\exp(\beta_2)$. If the estimated *hazard ratio*

[130] Because right-censored observations contribute less information than do departure or failure events, conventional wisdom restricts survival models to no more than one predictor for every ten such observations. Given our 104 observed departures in our dataset of 166, our models ideally should include no more than 10-12 predictors (i.e. an events-per-variable score, or EPV, of 8.5-10). Simulation studies have shown that this rule may be too conservative. For a discussion of EPV guidelines, see Eric Vittinghoff and Charles E. McCulloch, "Relaxing the Rule of Ten Events per Variable in Logistic and Cox Regression," *American Journal of Epidemiology* 165, no. 6 (2006).

[131] For stepwise selection as well as measures of model agreement, see Collett, *Modelling Survival Data*..

$\exp(\hat{\beta}_2)$ is greater than 1, the hazard rate (or failure risk) is greater for m than for j. When $\exp(\hat{\beta}_2)$ is less than one, m's hazard rate is lower; finally, a hazard ratio of 1 means the covariate x_2 has no effect.

Table 3.1. Estimates for **trimmed controls model** for Nixon advisor survival. The center column shows hazard ratios for each covariate; the right shows 95-percent confidence intervals.

	(1) Trimmed controls	
Control variables	**HR**	**CIs**
Start year	**1.19***	(0.98 - 1.44)
1968 campaign (1=yes)	0.61	(0.32 - 1.16)
Johnson holdover (1=yes)	**2.14*****	(1.23 - 3.74)
Number of agencies served in	**0.67*****	(0.52 - 0.86)
Presidential priority: PAS (1=yes)	1.51*	(0.99 - 2.32)
observations	247	
subjects	166	
failures	104	
time at risk (days)	164,894	
AIC	875.7	
$-2 \log \hat{L}$	865.7	
χ^2Test model v. null (5 df)	**30.25*****	

All estimates were performed using Stata 15.1 for Mac.
*** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1

We see that a one-year delay in an official's entry raises the hazard substantially (19 percent), as does being held over from the Johnson administration, which increases the risk of departure by more than twice over baseline. We see a decrease in an official's hazard ratio by a third for each additional agency she serves in, and positions requiring Senate approval (PAS) have much poorer survivability.

Theory plus controls and interactions

Building on this simple controls model I estimated two models, a *theory plus controls* and *interactions* model, to assess the importance of our primary theoretical variables of interest. Fit can be measured by comparing model AIC scores, and since the proposed models are nested we can use likelihood-ratio (LR) tests as well. Both are reported in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2. Cox regression estimates for Nixon advisor survival, **theory plus controls** and **interactions**. Center columns show hazard ratios; the right columns give 95-percent confidence intervals.

	(2) Theory plus controls		(3) Interactions	
Theory variables	**HR**	**CIs**	**HR**	**CIs**
policy preference distance ($Dist_{Pres}$)†	**1.29***	(1.00 - 1.68)	**2.08*****	(1.50 - 2.90)
personal information advantage				
age	**0.74****	(0.56 - 0.99)	**0.74****	(0.55 - 0.99)
Ph.D. (1=yes)	0.87	(0.47 - 1.62)	0.95	(0.50 - 1.80)
J.D. (1=yes)	1.15	(0.67 - 1.98)	1.11	(0.64 - 1.93)
Ivy-educated (1=yes)	0.90	(0.55 - 1.48)	0.73	(0.43 - 1.26)
agency information advantage				
robustness	**0.74***	(0.53 - 1.03)	1.05	(0.57 - 1.92)
log of agency size	1.10	(0.94 - 1.28)	0.96	(0.81 - 1.15)
policy scope (1=specialized)	1.03	(0.58 - 1.83)	0.97	(0.49 - 1.91)
cabinet official (1=yes)	1.40	(0.56 - 3.49)	1.86	(0.75 - 4.60)
agency competence	1.10	(0.82 - 1.48)	1.18	(0.86 - 1.62)
public career	0.74	(0.38 - 1.45)	0.96	(0.48 - 1.93)
policy domain (1=foreign pol.)	0.85	(0.49 - 1.46)	0.74	(0.40 - 1.35)
Interactions				
$Dist_{Pres}$ × robustness	—	—	**1.58***	(0.99 - 2.50)
$Dist_{Pres}$ × policy domain	—	—	**0.24*****	(0.14 - 0.42)
policy domain × robustness	—	—	0.64	(0.37 - 1.11)
$Dist_{Pres}$ × policy domain × robustness	—	—	**0.45*****	(0.27 - 0.74)
agency competence × public career	—	—	**0.42****	(0.21 - 0.86)
Control variables‡				
observations	247		247	
subjects	166		166	
failures	104		104	
time at risk (days)	164,894		164,894	
AIC	882		858.3	
$-2 \log \hat{L}$	848		814.3	
χ^2Test model v. null (17, 22 df)	**47.93*****		**81.65*****	
χ^2Test model v. trimmed controls (12, 17 df)	17.67		**51.39*****	
χ^2Test model v. theory plus controls (4 df)	—		**33.72*****	

*** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1

† Except for agency size, continuous variables have been standardized for ease of interpretation: $Dist_{Pres}$, age, robustness, and agency competence.

‡ Estimated but not reported; results for control variables do not vary substantively across these models.

Like the trimmed controls, these models substantially improve over the null, but the interactions model is clearly the best of the three; this salience of interactions is consistent with our expectations. There are two additional takeaways here. First, policy preference has a crucial impact on official survivability, both in its main effect and in interactions with our other focal variables, robustness and policy domain. In the *theory plus controls* model, for example, a one standard deviation increase in policy bias raises

an official's hazard ratio by nearly thirty percent (the effect of bias in our interactions model we will take up in detail below). Second, apart from age, our proxy for professional experience, other personal advantage measures – education level and type – are unimportant. This supports our claim that 'expertise,' or access to private, policy-relevant information, largely derives from institutional sources, and not personal endowments. This is also reflected in the substantial, and significant, effect of public careerism: When they serve in high-competence agencies, public servants' survivability is significantly higher than that of non-public servants serving in those same agencies.

These preliminary findings are consistent with our descriptive and non-parametric findings in previous chapters, and at first glance seem to confirm the core logic of the *ally principle* – that president Nixon preferred to surround himself with ideological allies. However, the theoretical logic is more complex than a straightforward homophily claim: We expect policy preference to have an interactive or moderating effect on informational advantage. Our interactions model gives a powerful clue that the more complex logic of politicization holds. However, assigning more specific interpretation to these interactions requires additional footwork, which we will take up below.

Policy-domain effects

Before we do, however, we turn to another key theoretical claim, that policy domain matters. In the social sciences, group effects – heteroskadisticity or correlated errors, for example – are common, and our dataset, which takes observations from thirty-six individual agencies and across two policy domains, is a reasonable candidate for such effects. One way to address group effects is to include indicators or dummies for each relevant group, as we have done with policy domain. However, including a large number of factor variables is likely to hurt our estimates' reliability while adding little, since we have already accounted for agency variation in other covariates.

A common alternative to a fixed-effects approach is to use robust or clustered standard errors, allowing errors to vary across groups.[132] Additionally, in survival analysis we can devise models with random group effects (*frailty models*), or can allow the unspecified hazard function to vary across groups (*stratified models*). We evaluated several possibilities, including random effects and stratified models on agency and policy domain, robust standard errors (i.e. errors adjusted for each observation) and robust errors adjusted for clustering on both agency and policy domain. Once extraneous covariates have been removed, a robust-error interactions model, with fixed effects and clustered errors for policy domain, is more efficient than our previous models. (Table 3.3.)

[132] Peter J. Huber, "The behavior of maximum likelihood estimates under nonstandard conditions" (paper presented at the Proceedings of the Fifth Berkeley Symposium on Mathematical Statistics and Probability, Volume 1: Statistics, Berkeley, Calif., 1967 1967); Halbert White, "A Heteroskedasticity-Consistent Covariance Matrix Estimator and a Direct Test for Heteroskedasticity," *Econometrica* 48, no. 4 (1980), http://www.jstor.org/stable/1912934.

Table 3.3. Estimates for Nixon advisor survival, **clustered policy model** with interactions. The center column gives hazard ratios; the right shows 95-percent confidence intervals.

	(4) Clustered policy	
Theory variables	**HR**	**CIs**
policy preference distance ($Dist_{Pres}$)†	**2.09*** **	(2.04 - 2.13)
personal information advantage: age	**0.84*** **	(0.77 - 0.91)
agency information advantage		
robustness	1.04	(0.96 - 1.14)
policy scope (1=specialized)	**0.87*** **	(0.86 - 0.89)
agency competence	**1.31*** **	(1.30 - 1.32)
public career	0.89	(0.58 - 1.36)
policy domain (1=foreign pol.)	0.88	(0.73 - 1.07)
Interactions		
$Dist_{Pres}$ × robustness	**1.52*** **	(1.47 - 1.58)
$Dist_{Pres}$ × policy domain	**0.25*** **	(0.23 - 0.26)
policy domain × robustness	**0.73*** **	(0.66 - 0.80)
$Dist_{Pres}$ × policy domain × robustness	**0.47*** **	(0.42 - 0.53)
agency competence × public career	**0.47** **	(0.23 - 0.96)
Control variables‡		
Johnson holdover (1=yes)	**3.43*** **	(2.76 - 4.27)
Number of units served on	**0.64*** **	(0.56 - 0.74)
observations	247	
subjects	166	
failures	104	
time at risk (days)	164,894	
AIC	827.5	
$-2 \log \hat{L}$	825.5	
χ^2Test model v. null (1 df)	**4.308** **	

*** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1
Covariates have been pared based on fitness, with main effects for all interacted variables kept in regardless of fit. Standard errors estimated using the sandwich variance estimator [Huber and White 1980; Lin and Wei 1989], adjusted for clustering on policy domain.

A closer look at interactions

We will use this *clustered policy model* to untangle the interaction between policy domain, policy preference, and agency robustness. While the interpretation and

significance of non-interactive Cox models is clear, interactions are not as straightforward as they are in linear regression.[133]

A useful approach to interactions in survival models is to calculate *predictive margins* at specified values on variables of interest, while holding other covariates at their observed values or at their means. We may also calculate *conditional marginal effects*, by computing the first derivative of a continuous variable while assigning values (usually the average) for all other covariates.[134] Figure 3.6 gives the conditional marginal effects of agency robustness as a function of policy preference and domain.

[133] To see why, let us specify a Cox model with two continuous predictors and an interaction between them. Recalling equation (6), the model for the jth individual would be

$$h\left(t\middle|x_{1j}, x_{2j}\right) = h_0(t)\exp(\beta_1 x_{1j} + \beta_2 x_{2j} + \beta_{12} x_{1j} x_{2j}). \tag{3.5}$$

Dividing by the baseline hazard gives us j's *relative hazard*,

$$\frac{h\left(t\middle|x_{1j}, x_{2j}\right)}{h_0(t)} = \exp(\beta_1 x_{1j} + \beta_2 x_{2j} + \beta_{12} x_{1j} x_{2j}) = \exp(\cdot). \tag{3.6}$$

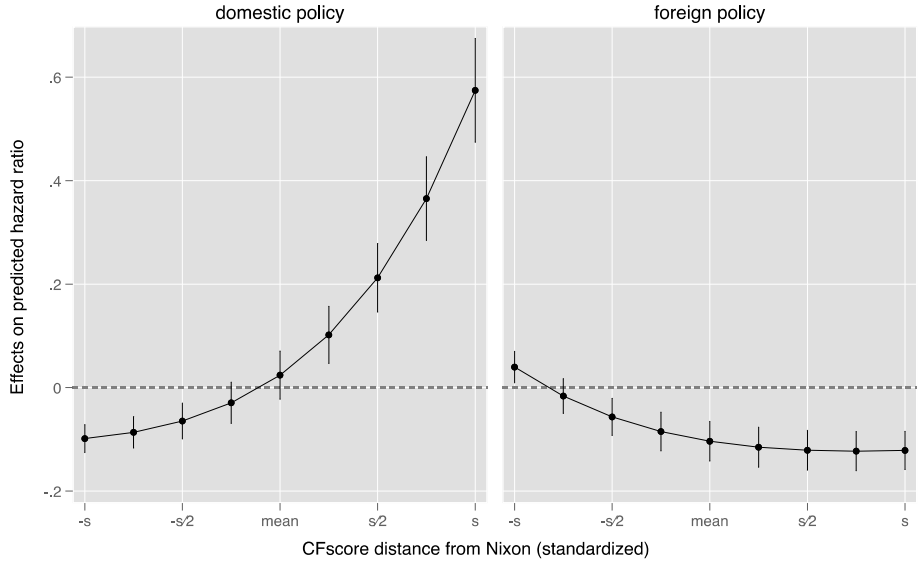
It is clear here that the coefficient on the interaction term, β_{12}, does not represent the interaction component or 'effect' in the intuitive, linear-regression sense – that is, the cross derivative of the expected value of our dependent variable. Instead the interaction's effect on the relative hazard in the model is given by the cross derivative of the exponential function,

$$\frac{\partial^2 \exp(\cdot)}{\partial x_1 \partial x_2} = \beta_{12}\exp(\cdot) + (\beta_1 + \beta_{12} x_{2j})(\beta_2 + \beta_{12} x_{1j})\exp(\cdot). \tag{3.7}$$

The presence of the exponential link function implies that all other coefficients will impact an interaction's effect in some way, and we cannot rely on a simple reported coefficient, or even its sign, as a measure of effect; this is a common feature of nonlinear interactive models. See Chunrong Ai and Edward Norton, "Interaction terms in logit and probit models," *Economics Letters* 80, no. 1 (2003).

[134] Richard Williams, "Using the margins command to estimate and interpret adjusted predictions and marginal effects," *Stata Journal* 12, no. 2 (2012).

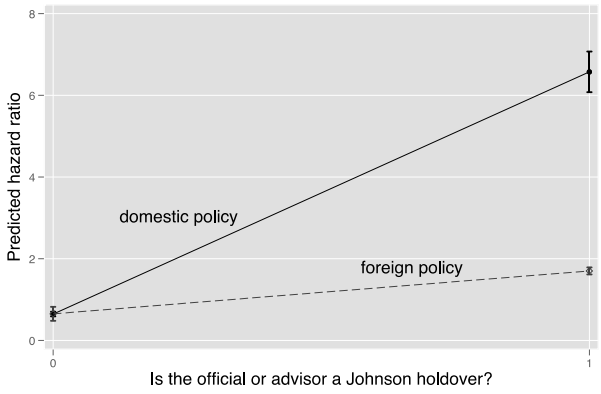
Figure 3.6. Conditional marginal effects, agency robustness. Here we see computed margins across standardized values of $Dist_{Pres}$, keeping other variables at their means. The x-axis shows multiples of the standard deviation (s) of $Dist_{Pres}$.



What we see is the impact that agency robustness has on an official's survival (hazard ratio) depending on policy preference distance or bias. As we shift from domestic policymaking to foreign policymaking, the difference in the two variables' relationship is stark. In the domestic case, agency robustness – the capacity to produce private, policy-relevant information – initially improves survival for officials that are ideological close to the president. Then, as an official's policy bias increases (as we move right along the x-axis), agency robustness hurts their survival (drives up their hazard ratio) dramatically. This clearly represents a strong *logic of politicization* in action, and access to better informational resources (robustness) exacerbates politicization pressures.

The same is clearly not true in foreign policy, however. Here we see that serving in a robust agency is nominally harmful at small biases, then *improves* survival as an advisor's or official's preferences diverges from the president. Why do liberal foreign-policy officials have better survivability? And why would being in a robust, more informative agency further insulate them? This is clearly contrary to the mainstream vision of a controlling, loyalty-fixated Nixon. It is, however, consistent with a basic quality foreign policy: There tends to be much more continuity of operation, personnel and purpose across administration. Including an interaction between holdover status and policy domain displays this clearly (Figure 3.7).

Figure 3.7. Survival of Johnson-era holdovers, by policy domain. Legacy advisors and officials have poorer survivability than new entrants. The effect, however, is worse in domestic policy.

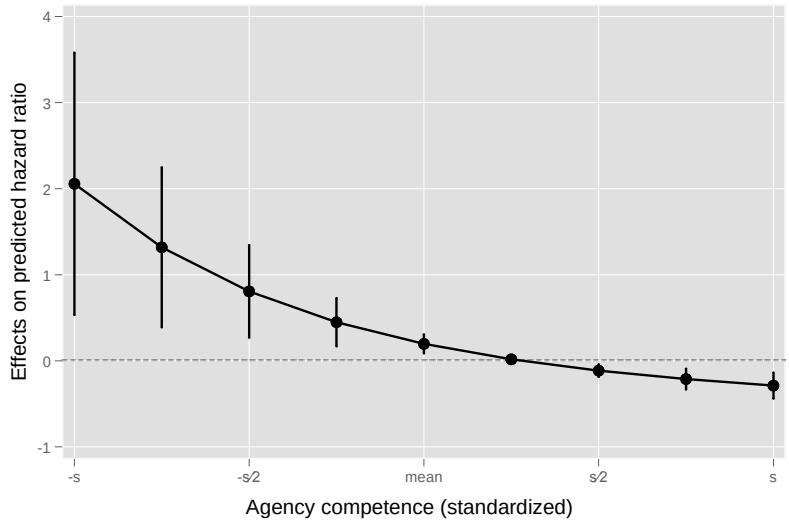


This finding also adds a dimension to research on *agency* survivability: Lewis points out (2003) that foreign-policy bodies are far more subject to presidential control than domestic ones. The overall weakness of politicization (or its de-ideologizing) may stem from this fact – that presidents already exercise unparalleled discretion over such agencies, and therefore do not need to politicize them.[135] Finally, by Nixon's own admission, his foreign policy beliefs were not orthodox or easily categorized. In a 1968 interview, Nixon described himself as neither a traditional isolationist nor progressive internationalist, but somewhere between.[136] (Nixon's complex foreign-policy preferences, and their effect on politicization will be treated in depth next chapter.)

There is a final interaction term included in our clustered model that deserves attention. This is the relationship between public careerism and agency competence. While their respective main effects are not significant, their interaction is. To better assess this dynamic I estimated a separate model for domestic-policy officials and advisors only. In this case I used robust standard errors clustering on the White House Office, an agency that accounts for roughly half of all domestic officials in our dataset. Figure 3.8 gives the marginal effect of having a public career, conditional on agency competence.

[135] Lewis, *Presidents and the Politics of Agency Design*.
[136] Mazo and Hess, *President Nixon*.

Figure 3.8. Conditional margin effect, public career, with 95-percent CIs. The x-axis gives multiples of the standard deviation (s) of agency competence.

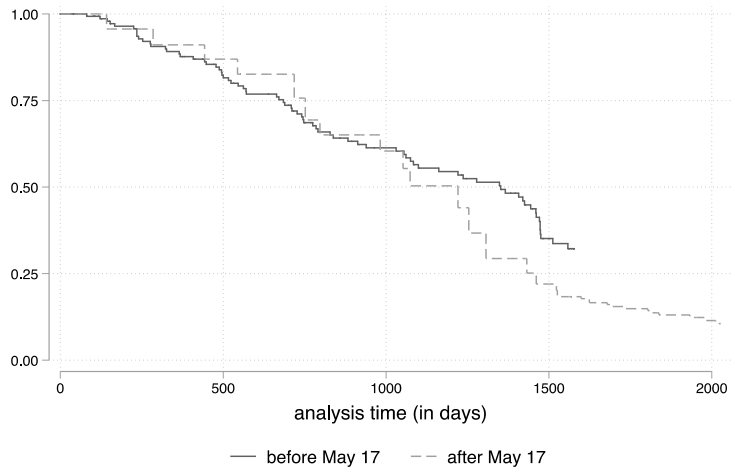


As the graph shows, the effect of a public career is to raise an official's hazard ratio when agency competence is low, and lower it when competence is high. In other words, the survival of public-career official improves when they 'match' with high-competence agencies. When they mismatch – for instance, when public servants serve in political agencies, or when an individual coming from the private sector serves in a high-competence unit – their survival suffers.

Watergate

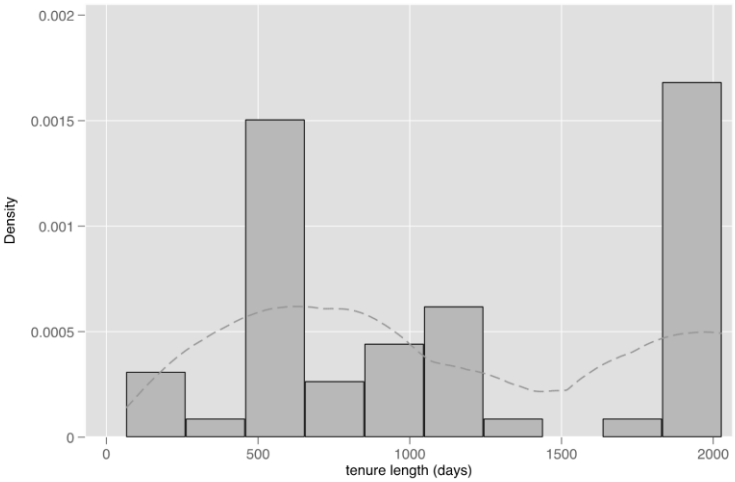
Finally, it is worth noting the lack of a *Watergate effect* in these data. In none of the models was the time-variant Watergate indicator significant. Non-parametrically, a log-rank test shows no difference in Kaplan-Meier survival estimates between officials who serve or start after the Senate Watergate hearings begin and those that do not (Figure 3.9).

Figure 3.9. K-M survival estimate for advisors serving or starting after the Senate Watergate hearings (May 17, 1973). ($P = 0.3623$)



If we assume advisors are more likely to "jump ship" after May 17, 1973, this might come as a surprise. A counter argument may be that policy or ideological alignment, demonstrably important in shaping tenure here, is also likely to impact how Watergate was perceived and processed. What's more, lower and higher policy biases can both militate against departure. Those most aligned with Nixon's preferences are likely to stay, all else equal, while the less-aligned hold out for an improved situation. Advisors with even greater biases are likely to have departed already. In Figure 3.10, we can see this bimodality among advisors who last through the Ford transition.

Figure 3.10. Kernel estimate of tenure length for advisors lasting through the Ford transition.



III. What we have found

In the main this chapter offers evidence to support the strategic information perspective. It is clear, however, that institutionally-related factors such policy domain, competence and expertise – often omitted or exogenized in the game theory literature – cannot be ignored in the applied context. What do our survival analysis say about the nature of official tenure, and the role politicization plays in retention? We can answer this in three broad observations:

1. Policy preference distance is a powerful determinant of tenure.

Consistent with expectations and theory, in all models an official's bias is a significant factor in how long she serves the president. This effect is dramatic and negative in domestic policy, where bias will weaken an official. This indicates a *politicization* logic at work in official retention.

In foreign policy, however, bias has a significant *mitigating* effect. Three conclusions flow from this last, somewhat counter-intuitive observation. First, foreign policy officials generally survive better than domestic officials; a foreign-policy role can be a powerful insulator against both attrition and politicization. Second, foreign policy development has much greater continuity than domestic policy, particularly when the previous administration was of a different party (Figure 3.7). Finally, it is reasonable to assume that ideology or bias, as measured by CFscore, does not function equally across policy domains. We will examine the last of these claims in greater detail next chapter.

2. Non-ideological, personal considerations are generally poor predictors of tenure.

Many of our covariates were not important, including economic variables that may motivate an individual to stay (salary level, or the opportunity costs of government service, e.g.), factors related to personal history – prior campaign work, for example, and the personal choice to stay, or to leave, in the wake of the Watergate revelations. As we know, president Nixon relied on a core of most-trusted officials. Yet contrary to mainstream portrayals of Nixon, loyalty itself does not appear to be a management strategy – apart from allegiance that grew out of, or could be attributed to, policy preference. There are exceptions (Nixon's personal regard for John Connolly, e.g.) but overall we observe a strong tendency to politicization, and not personalization, of executive power.

3. Institutional sources of informational advantage are more important than personal ones.

There is little evidence that *personal information advantage measures*, such as level or type of education, are important in lengthening tenure. There are two exceptions. The first is baseline age, our proxy for professional experience. This may be due in part to the fact that, in most administrations, younger, greener staffers are customarily placed in subordinate roles closer to the president, where patterns of retention can be more volatile. The second is public service. Although public careerists overall are no less likely to leave than their private-career counterparts, their survival improves when they serve in

high-competence organizations. Similarly, non-careerists perform poorly when placed in those same agencies.

By contrast, *agency advantage* is important. Specialization, whether an agency is specialist or generalist, improves survivability overall. Meanwhile an agency's robustness – its ability to generate proprietary information – can weaken ideologically distant officials, or strengthen loyal ones. It is worth noting that the latter measure, robustness, performs better than agency size, which is not significant in any of our models. This implies that medium-sized robust agencies (like the OEO, e.g.), perform the same in our models as large robust executive or independent agencies. What do these differently-sized robust agencies have in common? Not the ability to implement policy, where cabinet bureaucracies and independent agencies clearly have the advantage. More importantly, they share the ability to produce of private, policy-relevant information. This is what the president responds to, and it indicates what is at stake in political control of agency resources: Politicization strategies are less about controlling downstream outcomes, than rather controlling the upward flow of information, into the process of policy development.

VII. Conclusion

As I suggested in Chapter 1, retention is one part of the larger politicization strategy of *substitution* – the appointment of political figures into power, along with the removal or attrition of non-political or non-conforming ones. This chapter shows that under Nixon, retention is clearly a mechanism of politicization. But it also demonstrates that politicization is contingent, conditional on institutional characteristics: agency robustness, for example, which tends to exacerbate pressures, and specialization or competence, which tend to weaken them.

These dynamics are clearest in domestic policy. In foreign policy, however, politicization does not work the same way. It seems, at the very least, to be less driven by conventional ideology. We cannot conclude, however, that politicization is not operative in foreign policy. Instead, we must consider that it works according to a different logic, through a different kind of bias. In the next chapter we will examine politicization under an alternative measure of bias – policy-constrained belief in context of foreign policy.

Chapter 4: Nixon foreign policy: policy instruments, belief and politicization

In the last chapter we saw that an official or advisor's ideological distance from the president, the bias or gap between presidential ideology and their own, can profoundly impact how long they serve in the administration. While this follows from the ally principle, we found that it is contingent, not universal. *Robustness*, for example – an agency's informational resources – can dramatically strengthen the effect of bias.

Policy domain impacts bias's effect as well. When we move from domestic policy to foreign policy, biases of Nixon officials affect survival in unpredictable (or counter-intuitive) ways. We have found, for example, that informational resources work to *improve* the lot of ideologically more liberal officials.

I. The "whole-worlder"

It seems unlikely that Nixon would support ideological liberals *qua* liberals. After all, Nixon entered office in with unimpeachable Republican credentials and forged an administration that was in almost all respects conservative (Figures 2.1 and 2.2). On the other hand, Nixon admitted his views on foreign policy eluded easy classification. When asked in 1968 how we would "label himself," this is how he answered:

> Label mean different things to different people… Now let's take this conservative-liberal dialogue as it relates to foreign policy. The conservatives have been considered the isolationists and the internationalists were considered to be the liberals. So looking at my record you would have to say I'm a liberal on foreign policy. Because I recognize America's role in the world I am not an isolationist. I have supported foreign aid, for instance.
>
> But the old liberals who were internationalists 20 years ago now are turning inward. They are telling us to get out of Asia and Latin America, that we're overcommitted. My view, however, hasn't changed. While I make it very clear that we have to get other nations to assume their share of the responsibility, I also believe that we cannot withdraw from the world. Am I a conservative or a liberal? My answer is that I'm an internationalist.
>
> By another foreign policy standard it is said that a conservative is basically anti-Communist and a liberal does not believe that Communism is a particular threat. By this test I've been called a conservative. But I don't see the Communist world as one world. I see the shades of gray. I see it as a multicolor thing. So rather than say I'm a conservative, I say I'm a firm opponent of totalitarianism of any kind and a strong proponent of freedom. If you want to describe me, you might say I'm a "whole-worlder." Too many people have been "half-worlders." Some have been able to see the danger in Asia but not in Europe and others have been able to see the danger in Europe but not in Asia. What we've got to see is the whole world.[137]

[137] Mazo and Hess, *President Nixon*, 315-16.

This somewhat tortured triangulation – Nixon's commitment to internationalism amid the growing sense that the U.S. was over-leveraged on its strategic commitments, his "multicolor" vision of communism (echoes of his widely-circulated *Foreign Policy* piece of 1967[138]) – reflects the two central inheritances of the Nixon administration. The first was the war in Vietnam. Once in office Nixon sought a "just end" to the conflict via the transfer of military responsibility from U.S. to South Vietnamese troops (*Vietnamization*). While transfer and peace were strategic goals, Nixon, Kissinger and other administration officials believed that forcing the Communists to the bargaining table on favorable terms would depend on a complex layering of operations, including 'offsetting' escalations like the CIA-led campaign into Cambodia in 1970 and the 1972 Christmas bombing of North Vietnam.

Vietnamization was a reflection of Nixon's second inheritance: An emerging global multipolarity. Nixon opined that the U.S.'s increasingly qualified supremacy meant it could no longer afford to make military intervention its centerpiece foreign policy.[139] As with Nixon's approach to Vietnam, what became known as the *Nixon Doctrine* deployed layered, offsetting policies: As U.S. allies, particularly in Asia, were asked to supply the manpower needed for their own security, the U.S. would strengthen its nuclear guarantee and normalize its relationship with China, thereby repudiating the original justification for U.S. involvement in Vietnam and setting the stage for later détente policy.[140]

Domain-specific ideologies or structured beliefs

Nixon was perhaps right to suggest that conventional party or ideology labels were of limited use in what diplomatic historian James Chace called the "post-post-war world."[141] The preceding decade of the Vietnam War had eroded the ideological and bipartisan consensus in U.S. foreign affairs. Yet while Americans and policy elites grew increasingly divided on foreign policy, the lines separating them did not hew to conventional partisan or ideological cleavages.

For some scholars, understanding this transition required a 'new' lexicon of ideology or structured beliefs. Such alternative categories – isolationism or internationalism, e.g. – were specific to foreign policy, and as Nixon himself suggests

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[138] Richard M. Nixon, "Asia after Viet Nam," *Foreign Affairs* 46, no. 1 (1967), http://www.jstor.org.libproxy.chapman.edu/stable/20039285.

[139] In global economic affairs, Nixon addressed multipolarity with his five-power or "pentagonal" concept, first elaborated in a January 3, 1972 *TIME magazine* interview. Quoted in Alastair Buchan, "A World Restored?," *Foreign Affairs* 50, no. 4 (1972), http://www.jstor.org.libproxy.chapman.edu/stable/20037938.

[140] Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 272-341; Joan Hoff, "A Revisionist View of Nixon's Foreign Policy," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (1996), http://www.jstor.org/stable/27551553; Jeffrey Kimball, "The Nixon Doctrine: A Saga of Misunderstanding," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (2006), http://www.jstor.org/stable/27552747.

[141] James Chace, "The Five-Power World of Richard Nixon," *New York Times Magazine*, Feb. 20, 1972.

above, were often only loosely aligned with left-right ideology. The most well-known typology of foreign-policy belief during this period comes from the leadership surveys of Holsti and Rosenau.[142] They identify two structured beliefs. The first, *cooperative internationalism* (CI), stresses (in the Cold-War context) détente, international institutions, and interstate cooperation. The second is *militant internationalism* (MI), highlighting the conflictual nature of international affairs, the zero-sum relationship between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, and the necessity of the use of force, even covert action, in U.S. foreign policy.[143] Holsti and Rosenau find that liberals at home are more likely to favor CI abroad, and conservatives are more likely to favor MI-style policies.

This MI/CI dichotomy is empirically supported, largely consistent across studies, and tracks with the theoretical division in international relations between realism and liberalism. (As we will see it is also partly supported by our analysis here.) Precisely how an individual's categorization translates into policy preferences is not well understood, however, nor are reasons for the coherence between domestic and foreign policy beliefs in the first place. Most importantly, we have no direct access to attitudinal data for specific presidential administrations. Thus while the MI/CI dichotomy can be helpful, to understand politicizing behavior we need a more data-supported measure.

Policy-constrained ideology and preferenceship

Other research on the intersection of ideology and foreign policy finds that the conventional left-right divide is operative but that its effect depends on characteristics of the specific policy or policy area. Milner and Tingley (2015) show that foreign policies with specific distributional outcomes, such as trade policy, will more likely be governed by left-right division than policies whose costs or benefits are generally felt.[144]

We can think of both "supply" and "demand" explanations for this. Foreign-policy outputs often represent benefits that are neither excludable nor rival, and thus tend not to encourage the sort of narrow advantage seeking of private or special interests endemic in domestic policy. And the president's prerogative powers insulate him or her

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[142] There have been numerous studies of U.S. foreign-policy belief, starting with public opinion surveys; see Sidney Verba et al., "Public Opinion and the War in Vietnam," *The American Political Science Review* 61, no. 2 (1967), http://www.jstor.org/stable/1953248; Miroslav Nincic and Jennifer M. Ramos, "Ideological structure and foreign policy preferences," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 15, no. 2 (2010). In the post-Vietnam era survey work extended to opinion leaders and policy makers; especially crucial is that sponsored by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, and Holsti and Rosenau's Foreign Policy Leadership Project; see Holsti and Rosenau, "The Domestic and Foreign Policy Beliefs of American Leaders."; Holsti and Rosenau, "The Structure of Foreign Policy Attitudes among American Leaders."; Eugene R. Wittkopf, "On the Foreign Policy Beliefs of the American People: A Critique and Some Evidence," *International Studies Quarterly* 30, no. 4 (1986), http://www.jstor.org/stable/2600643.

[143] Rathbun, "Hierarchy and Community."

[144] Helen V. Milner and Dustin Tingley, *Sailing the Water's Edge: The Domestic Politics of American Foreign Policy* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press,, 2015).

from what ideological pressures do exist, whether originating from those special interests, or from Congress. Similarly, the impact of party or ideology on foreign-policy votes can depend on whether the issues involved constitute high or low politics, with bipartisanism more likely in the former.[145]

This "policy constraint" suggests that if politicization occurs in foreign policy, it should operate on policy areas, a level of specificity not captured in our tenure dataset in the last two chapters.[146] What's more, that foreign-policy belief can be disaggregated to the level of policy, suggests that it may be more profitable to look for a constellation of stable, internally coherent policy preferences, instead of an ideological category. In other words, we might look for what Krebiehl calls "preferenceship."[147]

Downstream products of belief

How can we assess a bundle of coherent preferences? One way is to measure its more concrete epiphenomenal or "downstream" products. Putting aside the task of assigning camps or defining categories of structured belief, we can instead evaluate individual officials on the policy instruments they select, or how they assess threats and assign policy priorities.[148]

For Milner and Tingley, *area* of policy is important because it shapes the distributional outcomes of a policy, and these outcomes in turn create divisions (of the ideological sort) over the proper *policy instrument* a president or Congress should choose.

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[145] James M. McCormick and Eugene R. Wittkopf, "Bipartisanship, Partisanship, and Ideology in Congressional-Executive Foreign Policy Relations, 1947-1988," *The Journal of Politics* 52, no. 4 (1990), http://www.jstor.org/stable/2131683. Meernik and Oldmixon (2004) find that domestic economic conditions put foreign policy's distributional effects in greater relief, making bipartisan consensus less likely; see James Meernik and Elizabeth Oldmixon, "Internationalism in Congress," *Political Research Quarterly* 57, no. 3 (2004), https://doi.org/10.1177/106591290405700310.

[146] An indicator for economic (foreign) policy is not significant in any of our survival models either as a main effect or interaction.

[147] Krehbiel, "Where's the Party?." There have been attempts to combine roll-call data with a bill's content, captured via probabilistic topic models, to develop an *issue-adjusted ideal point model* for legislative behavior. There are to my knowledge are no current applications to presidential or administration officials' behavior. See Sean M. Gerrish and David M. Blei, "Predicting legislative roll calls from text" (Proceedings of the 28th International Conference on International Conference on Machine Learning, Bellevue, Washington, USA, Omnipress, 3104544, 2011); Sean M. Gerrish and David M. Blei, "How they vote: issue-adjusted models of legislative behavior" (Proceedings of the 25th International Conference on Neural Information Processing Systems - Volume 2, Lake Tahoe, Nevada, Curran Associates Inc., 2999442, 2012).

[148] This follows Gerring's (1997) stress on the concreteness of belief or ideology: Unlike political philosophy, they tend to identify "a set of issue-positions." John Gerring, "Ideology: A Definitional Analysis," *Political Research Quarterly* 50, no. 4 (1997), http://www.jstor.org/stable/448995.

For example, in trade policy the use of tariffs will be opposed by ideological conservatives as an intrusion in the market, while liberals, who are more concerned about workers and inequality, are more likely to embrace them. Trade policy is one place where we should see a strong left-right ideological divide; by contrast, support for military intervention tends to map uneasily onto left-right belief.[149]

Outline and logic of this chapter

Conditional on policy area, then, beliefs tend to create demand for (or rejection of) specific *policy instruments*. Of course, beliefs do more than that. Beliefs involve sets of temporally stable claims about values (like human rights or free markets), as well as the nature and scale of threat posed by foreign actors. Because of this, beliefs generate priorities, dictating the goals and policy instruments to which administration resources should be assigned.

Text-as-data methodology have been used to study both policy instruments[150] and expressions of policy priority.[151] For the sake of simplicity, we will focus on one of these – prevalence of policy instruments – to infer underlying belief and assess its effects. We utilize a structural topic model,[152] estimated over a corpus of foreign policy-related documents – memoranda, policy proposals, speeches, public statements and private correspondences – from practitioners in the Nixon administration.

This chapter continues by laying out the logic of textual representation of belief. It will flesh out the details of the text-as-data methodology, describing the document corpus, which comprises the Nixon volumes of the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series, and the extraction of meta-features (such as a document's authors, dateline and intended audience). It will describe document preprocessing and model estimation. We will *validate* the resulting topic model using a number of strategies, including examining changes in topic prevalence over time.

We will then demonstrate how topics can encode choices over policy instrument. To generate a distance measure on such choices or preference for policy, however, we need to go beyond lone topics, and assess the president and officials over many topics at once – in other words, on an official's distributions over policy-related topics. This summary measure is simple. We will generate a "representative" or average document for our officials, who comprise over sixty-nine members of the Nixon foreign-policy team, including *inter alia* the President, Kissinger, William Rogers, Alexander Haig,

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[149] Support here may be context-specific; for instance, liberals may generally reject military intervention but accept it to protect human rights. Conservatives, meanwhile, are generally more hawkish but may reject intervention out of concern for costs. See Milner and Tingley, *Sailing the Water's Edge*, 60.

[150] Milner and Tingley, *Sailing the Water's Edge*.

[151] Justin Grimmer, *Representational Style in Congress: What Legislators Say and Why It Matters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[152] Margaret E. Roberts et al., "Structural topic models for open-ended survey responses," *American Journal of Political Science* 58 (2014); M. E. Roberts et al., "The Structural Topic Model and Applied Social Science" (Advances in Neural Information Processing Systems Workshop on Topic Models: Computation, Application, and Evaluation, 2015).

Elliot Richardson and Melvin Laird. From these average or representative documents we will calculate a *probabilistic distance* from the president, as well as distances between officials. Finally, bearing in mind Gerring's (1997) observation that ideology or belief is important inasmuch as it "directs, or at least, influence" behavior, we will circle back to our tenure dataset, and will show that distance from the president, on choice of policy instruments, can impact survival of foreign-policy officials.[153]

Policy making and the text-as-data perspective

The analysis that follows is based on three key assumptions. This first is that the texts generated by policy practitioners – letters, telegrams, papers, proposals, and so forth – offer indirect evidence of the practitioner's underlying beliefs. In other words, texts capture what Boyd-Graber, Yu and Mimno describe as an author's "internal state."[154] We further assume that this internal state – preferenceship or belief – can be inferred using unsupervised computational methods. Language in text is an important medium of expressing preference; presidents and others express beliefs in public pronouncements, debates, position papers, platforms, and so forth. Close reading is the most reliable way to parse the underlying preferences that motivate texts, but can be labor-intensive as the body of texts grows. For this reason political scientists have begun turning to text-as-data methods, allowing them to perform a host of semantic analyses on very large document sets. These analyses include ideological scaling and the classification of texts into known and unknown categories.[155] The last of these, methods of automated classification, can potentially reveal relationships among texts that can escape even diligent and informed close reading.[156] Finally, we assume that the topics estimated from our model here are not just ideational or expressive. They either constitute political behavior or are close corollaries of it. Within an administration, what practitioners talk about is always more than just detached musings; written words are direct efforts to affect policy outcomes.

What the models estimated here cannot do is establish, via programmatic means, specific differences of opinion or policy position. Gerring characterizes ideology (or, as we have termed it, simply belief) as possessing internal *coherence*, external *contrast*, and stability over time. While we assume that priorities and so forth are the downstream products of internally *coherent* belief, we are much less able to capture contrast, the property of differentiating oneself, apart from our distance measure.

And even that distance measure may be unreliable. DW-NOMINATE and CFScores are calculated using Congressional roll-call vote, or campaign contributions, which are already expressions of contrast or dispute between lawmakers or private citizens. Our distance measure reflects neither of these. Instead it assesses difference in the intensity, or prevalence, of language related to policy instruments.

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[153] Gerring, "Ideology: A Definitional Analysis."
[154] Jordan Boyd-Graber, Yuening Hu, and David Mimno, "Applications of Topic Models," *Foundations and Trends in Information Retrieval* 11, no. 2-3 (2017).
[155] Justin Grimmer and Brandon M. Stewart, "Text as Data: The Promise and Pitfalls of Automatic Content Analysis Methods for Political Texts," *Political Analysis* 21, no. 3 (2013), http://www.jstor.org/stable/24572662.
[156] Grimmer, *Representational Style.*

II. Probabilistic topic models

Below we will use a method of automated classification known as p*robabilistic topic models*. These are Bayesian generative models that classify documents by the prevalence of topics within them. They assume each document in a corpus to contain a mixture of topics, which are a probability distribution over words.[157]

In recent years text classification through probabilistic topic models has become an increasingly important political science methodology. While the first and best-known topic model is *latent Dirichlet allocation*,[158] other models have been developed, including several that are specific to political science.[159] Topic models all share a common definition of documents and topics. They first assume each document is a *bag of words*, an order-free group of words or tokens.[160] Word frequency in each document is conditioned by the document's mixture of *topics*, which are defined as a probability mass function over words. The probability that a word appears in a document is given by the joint probability that the topic appears in the document, with the conditional probability that the word appears given that topic. The probability of the ith words in a document with T topics is given by

$$P(w_i) = \sum_{j=1}^{T} P(w_i|z_i = j)P(z_i = j) \tag{4.1}$$

where z_i is the topic from which w_i is drawn. The right-hand terms can be re-written as

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[157] Further details are provided below. For a review, see David M. Blei, "Probabilistic topic models," *Communications ACM* 55, no. 4 (2012); Thomas L. Griffiths and Mark Steyvers, "Finding scientific topics," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 101, no. suppl 1 (2004).

[158] David M. Blei, Andrew Y. Ng, and Michael I. Jordan, "Latent dirichlet allocation," *J. Mach. Learn. Res.* 3 (2003).

[159] Justin Grimmer, "A Bayesian Hierarchical Topic Model for Political Texts: Measuring Expressed Agendas in Senate Press Releases," *Political Analysis* 18, no. 1 (2010), http://www.jstor.org/stable/25791991; Kevin M. Quinn et al., "How to Analyze Political Attention with Minimal Assumptions and Costs," *American Journal of Political Science* 54, no. 1 (2010), http://www.jstor.org/stable/20647980.

[160] A partial exception to the "orderlessness" of the bag of words, is the discovery of meaningful collocations or *n-grams* within a corpus. Substituting separate terms with a collocation, which preserves some word order, may be appropriate in some contexts, including where texts use a highly institutionalized, idiosyncratic vocabulary. Since that is the case in this corpus, n-grams of degree two to four were discovered, ranked using *pointwise mutual information* and validated for comprehensibility before substitution. See Keh-Yih Su, Ming-Wen Wu, and Jing-Shin Chang, "A corpus-based approach to automatic compound extraction" (Proceedings of the 32nd annual meeting on Association for Computational Linguistics, Las Cruces, New Mexico, Association for Computational Linguistics, 981765, 1994).

$$\phi^{(j)} = P(w_i|z_i = j), \tag{4.2}$$

a multinomial distribution over words for topic j that indicates which words that are important for that topic, and

$$\theta^{(d)} = P(z), \tag{4.3}$$

a multinomial distribution over topics for document d in D documents. This indicates the prevalence or weights of topics in that document.[161]

Topic models assume that each document is the result of a multi-step generative process. First, each document's topic mixture is drawn from a prior distribution. For LDA this is typically a T-dimensional symmetric Dirichlet:

$$\theta^{(d)} \sim Dir(\alpha_1 = \cdots = \alpha_T = \alpha). \tag{4.4}$$

Thereafter each word is selected by picking topic j from this distribution, then picking a word from j according to $\phi^{(j)}$. Since the only data we have are the words in each document (and documents in the corpus), θ and ϕ are latent parameters that must be inferred, and their estimation is usually the preliminary (and often, the primary) concern for the researcher. And although estimation is unsupervised, in most cases the number of topics T must be provided beforehand, along with after-fit descriptions or labels for the resulting topics.

Several alternatives to LDA, including the *structural topic model* (STM) used here, substitute a logistic normal prior for the Dirichlet. Changing the data-generating function has the advantage of allowing the incorporation of document-specific covariates, such as dates, authors, place of origin, and so forth, to evaluate their effect on topic weights.[162] These approaches are part of the family of "upstream" topic models, which assume that metadata or external variables precede the text, and incorporates them early on in the generative process. "Downstream" models, by contrast, use text estimates to predict external variables or metadata, through regression or other procedures. [163] Our analysis combines upstream elements (largely thanks to the off-the-shelf functionality of STM) with downstream ones: descriptive statistics and regression procedures that help contextualize and understand the real-life significance of our topic estimations.

Assembling the corpus: The Foreign Relations series

[161] Griffiths and Steyvers, "Finding scientific topics."
[162] David M. Blei and John D. Lafferty, "A correlated topic model of Science," *Ann. Appl. Stat.* 1, no. 1 (2007); Grimmer, "A Bayesian Hierarchical Topic Model."; M. Roberts, B. Stewart, and D. Tingley, "stm: R Package for Structural Topic Models," *Journal of Statistical Software* (forthcoming).
[163] Boyd-Graber, Hu, and Mimno, "Applications of Topic Models."

The corpus we will use is the *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) series. Published by the State Department's Office of the Historian, FRUS comprises over 450 volumes spanning from 1861 to approximately the end of the first Bush administration. Modern volumes (since 1952) are separated by presidential administration. The Nixon administration comprises 67 total volumes, organized by country or region (Chile or South Asia, e.g.) or policy area (European Security or Foreign Assistance, e.g.) and currently includes one retrospective volume.[164]

We began by downloading all available Nixon e-volumes from the combined Nixon and Ford series. These files are essentially wrappers around HTML, so each volume's documents could be scraped using standard techniques. Extracting meta-features from texts required natural language processing, which was implemented in Java with proprietary code, as well as the *Stanford CoreNLP* library.[165] This made it possible to programmatically determine whether a text was usable (for the study), and to extract metadata such as the individual, individuals or agency responsible for composing the text, the persons, persons or agency it was meant for, its dateline, and other features.

I also assumed that each document's region or geographical focus was related to the volume it came from, and coded each document accordingly. For the sake of comparability with the previous chapter, I omitted documents from individuals who had no CFScore. Volumes, text counts and geographical foci are given in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. *Foreign Relations of the United States* corpus.

Volume name	***# of docs***	***Geo. focus***
Southern Africa	44	**Africa**
subtotal	**44**	
China, 1969–1972	100	**East Asia**
China, 1973–1976	24	
Documents on East and Southeast Asia, 1973–1976	56	
Korea, 1969–1972	57	
subtotal	**237**	
Eastern Europe; Eastern Mediterranean, 1969–1972	129	**E. Med.**
Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1973–1976	9	
subtotal	**138**	
European Security	58	**Europe**
Germany and Berlin, 1969–1972	153	
Western Europe; NATO, 1969–1972	144	
subtotal	**355**	
Chile, 1969–1973	83	**Lat. Am.**
Documents on Chile, 1969–1973	9	
Documents on South America, 1973–1976	48	

[164] Craig Daigle and Nina Howland, eds., *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976*, vol. I-LXVI (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 2011).
[165] Christopher Manning et al., "The Stanford CoreNLP Natural Language Processing Toolkit" (Baltimore, Maryland, Association for Computational Linguistics, 2014).

	subtotal	**140**	
Arab-Israeli Crisis and War, 1973		126	**Middle East**
Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1969–1972		154	
Energy Crisis, 1969–1974		89	
Energy Crisis, 1974–1980		1	
Middle East Region and Arabian Peninsula, 1969–1972; Jordan, September 1970		124	
	subtotal	**494**	
South Asia Crisis, 1971		117	**South Asia**
	subtotal	**117**	
Southeast Asia, 1969–1972		98	**S.E. Asia**
Vietnam, January 1969–July 1970		173	
Vietnam, January 1973–July 1975		34	
Vietnam, January–October 1972		98	
Vietnam, July 1970–January 1972		126	
Vietnam, October 1972–January 1973		166	
	subtotal	**695**	
SALT I, 1969–1972		97	**Soviet Union**
SALT II, 1972–1980		20	
Soviet Union, August 1974–December 1976		16	
Soviet Union, January 1969–October 1970		81	
Soviet Union, June 1972–August 1974		53	
Soviet Union, October 1970–October 1971		75	
Soviet Union, October 1971–May 1972		73	
	subtotal	**415**	
Documents on Arms Control and Nonproliferation, 1969–1972		126	**Unknown**
Documents on Global Issues, 1969–1972		181	
Documents on Global Issues, 1973–1976		45	
Foreign Assistance, International Development, Trade Policies, 1969–1972		216	
Foreign Economic Policy, 1973–1976		55	
Foreign Economic Policy; International Monetary Policy, 1969–1972		79	
Foundations of Foreign Policy, 1969–1972		50	
Foundations of Foreign Policy, 1973–1976		13	
National Security Policy, 1969–1972		92	
Organization and Management of Foreign Policy; Public Diplomacy, 1973–1976		45	
Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy, 1969–1972		166	
United Nations, 1969–1972		148	
	subtotal	**1216**	
	overall total	**3851**	

Topic modeling can give poor results when texts differ in length and structure, which is generally the case here, so the series format imposes a degree of conformity, as does the natural-language pre-processing, which roots out texts (conversation transcripts, e.g.) that

are hard to interpret. By the same coin, however, the editorial process used to create the FRUS series can impose limitations or interpretations on the data. Unlike the press-release corpus used by Grimmer (2013), these texts have undergone substantial prior vetting, editing, even censoring, and we will indicate where were think this may impact the reliability of our results.

To ready the corpus for estimation, words with little or no semantic value (stopwords) were removed. Since we are interested in topics that reflect *more general* policy preferences, and not those about staffing, personnel, scheduling, or granular policy choices, we also removed proper personal and place names.[166] The remaining words were then stemmed.[167] In cases of organizational or agency names, specific doctrines or policies, I substituted individual constituent terms for two- to four-degree n-grams (see fn 2, above). Instead of treating "National Security Council" as three separate terms, for example, they were collocated into a single trigram. The resulting corpus has 3,851 documents, a dictionary of 4,629 unique terms, and 650,023 term tokens.

Number of topics and model estimation

Nearly all topic models require the researcher to provide the number of topics, T. Too small a number will result in broad topics that aggregate subjects that should be separate. Too large a number affects the interpretability of the results. There are two common approaches to selecting the number of topics. The first is to use *held-out likelihood*, which measures how well the model, estimated over the corpus, fits untrained or "held-out" documents.[168] Chang, et al. (2009) show, however, that better statistical fit may not give topics that are comprehensible to human subjects.[169] Alternative metrics such as *exclusivity* or *semantic coherence* can improve results, but in the end these must be facially validated, drawing on the researcher's prior knowledge and judgment.[170]

We estimated models for topic numbers ranging from five to 100, selecting a range of these based initially on held-out likelihood, semantic coherence and exclusivity.

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[166] Justin Grimmer, "Measuring Representation Style in the House: The Tea Party, Obama, and Legislator's Changing Expressed Priorities," in *Computational Social Science: Discovery and Prediction*, ed. R. Michael Alvarez, Analytical Methods for Social Research (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

[167] Lisa Blaydes, Justin Grimmer, and Alison McQueen, "Mirrors for Princes and Sultans: Advice on the Art of Governance in the Medieval Christian and Islamic Worlds," *The Journal of Politics* 80, no. 4 (2018); Matthew J. Denny and Arthur Spirling, "Text Preprocessing For Unsupervised Learning: Why It Matters, When It Misleads, And What To Do About It," *Political Analysis* 26, no. 2 (2018).

[168] Hanna M. Wallach et al., "Evaluation Methods for Topic Models" (Proceedings of the 26th International Conference on Machine Learning, Montreal, Canada, 2009).

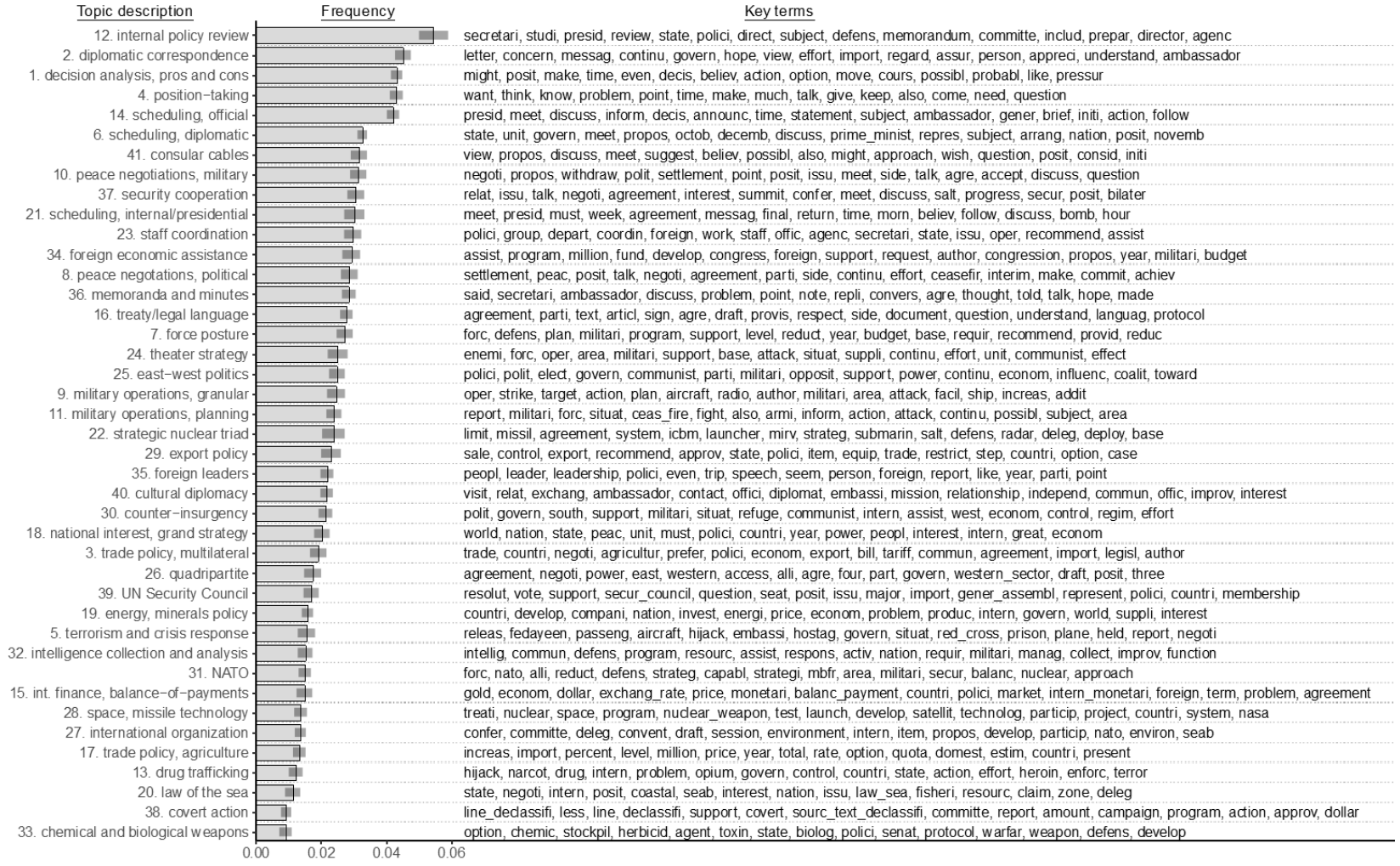
[169] Jonathan Chang et al., "Reading tea leaves: how humans interpret topic models" (Proceedings of the 22nd International Conference on Neural Information Processing Systems, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, Curran Associates Inc., 2009).

[170] Boyd-Graber, Hu, and Mimno, "Applications of Topic Models."; Edoardo M. Airoldi and Jonathan M. Bischof, "Improving and Evaluating Topic Models and Other Models of Text," *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 111, no. 516 (2016).

This subset was evaluated for topic quality, and closely read before selection. This resulted in a 41-topic structural topic model. Topic descriptions were supplied by hand. Results are shown in Fig. 4.1.[171]

[171] All topic estimation, distance measurement, bootstrapping and visualizations of covariate effects in this chapter were performed in R. For the summary of cluster means, predicted hazard ratios and conditional effects (Figures 4.10, 4.12 and 4.13) I used Stata 15.1 for Mac.

Figure 4.1. The 41-topic structural topic model. Topic descriptions are provided by hand. Frequency of each topic is averaged over the corpus (with 95% CIs provided). Key terms are the fifteen most frequent terms for each topic.



Topic validation and over time prevalence

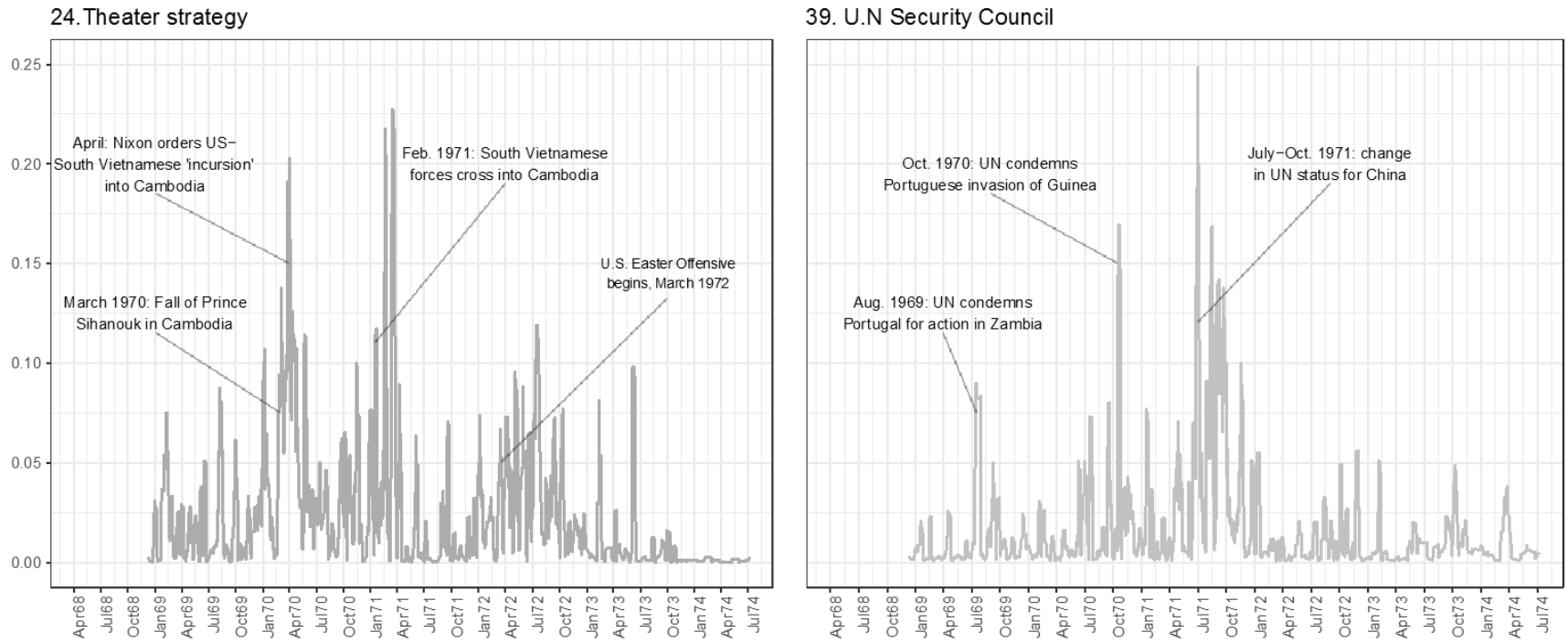
Since classification is left to the model, post-fit validation by the researcher is absolutely essential. Grimmer and King (2011) offer experimental strategies to test for *semantic validity* (that is, the degree that topics are internally coherent and distinct from other topics). These can be carried out by assistants or via services like MTurk. We opted instead for assessments of *predictive validity*, whether a topic's prevalence responds as we might expect to external conditions or events.[172]

At first read, the topics in Table 4.1 are intuitive and meaningful. Most frequent topics relate to modes of communication (12. internal policy review; 2. diplomatic correspondence; 41. consular cables), argumentation or decision-making (1. decision analysis, pros and cons; 4. position-taking) or bureaucratic "housekeeping" (14. scheduling, official; 6. scheduling, diplomatic). Despite removal of location terms, several topics are clearly region-specific (25. east-west politics; 26. quadripartite); others are clearly organization-specific (39. UN Security Council; 31. NATO).

To further validate these topics, we examine how external events affect their prevalence. Figure 4.2 shows how topics related to Vietnam theater strategy (24) and the U.N. Security Council (39) spike in response to external events. The Security Council topic is largely focused in (southern) Africa, and in part references the management of UN reactions to Portuguese colonial war and the status of South West Africa (Namibia). Africa remains relevant as, starting with Kissinger's secret trip to Beijing in July 1971, the topic shifts decisively to China's accession to the UN Security Council's permanent membership.[173]

[172] Justin Grimmer and Gary King, "General purpose computer-assisted clustering and conceptualization," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 108, no. 7 (2011).
[173] Of seventy-six votes in favor of U.N. General Assembly Resolution 2758, twenty-five came from African countries.

Figure 4.2. **Over time validation**. Increases in topic prevalence in the corpus correlate to external events. In this case we see important starting points or catalyzing events (e.g. the U.S. Easter Offensive) associated with a sustained increase in topic prevalence.



III. Assessing the prevalence of policy instruments

Estimating the effects of document-level covariates provides evidence that topics encode our downstream products of belief – policy instruments and priorities. As we have seen, the logistic normal prior used in the structural topic model admits a covariance structure. For each document we provided categorical variables for the agency in which the document originated, the geographical focus (inferred from its FRUS volume), the CFScore of the author (using a spline fit), and indicator variables for whether it was a direct communication to the president, or came from him. The results let us see how these covariates affect the topic prevalence, or how intensely it appears in a document.

As we have seen, several of our topics appear to reference general areas of concern (e.g. east-west politics, law of the sea), still others modes of communication or bureaucratic housekeeping. Most, however, clearly relate to specific *policy instruments*. Among these are peace negotiations (in the military and political dimensions), security cooperation, nuclear (strategic triad) policy, trade, international monetary policy and foreign aid, intelligence gathering and covert operations.

That our estimated topics primarily refer to policy instruments is convenient for our analysis, but should come as no surprise – after all, the corpus documents were selected for their relevance on issues of policy. Nonetheless, we must confirm that topics relate to policy and do not just reflect the subject matter of discussions. (In the following we assume, for topics referring to policy instruments, that topic prevalence expresses that instrument's relative fitness or appropriateness to an official.[174])

Communicating with the President

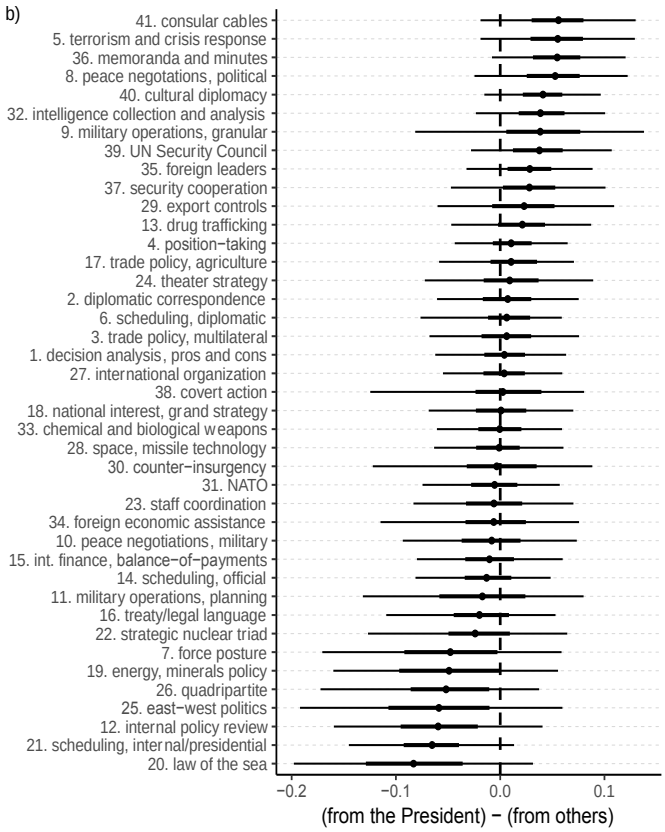
To validate our topics as policy instruments, we will examine the interaction between their prevalence and document-level covariates, beginning with indicators for whether a communication was directed to the president (as opposed to another official) or came from him. In Figure 4.3.a, we see that direct communications to the president tend to convey housekeeping or meta-communication-style topics, including internal review (12), scheduling (14 and 21), and diplomatic communications (2 and 41). Substantive topics directed most frequently to Nixon are related to treaty language (16) and the strategic nuclear triad (22).

[174] Milner and Tingley, *Sailing the Water's Edge*.

Figure 4.3.a. Topic prevalence for direct communications to President Nixon. (Thicker bands are with 50% CIs; thinner bands are 95% CIs.)

By contrast, topics coming *from* Nixon are nearly all substantive. While confidence bands are wider here, the results fit our expectations of policy areas and instruments that Nixon prioritized, including terrorism response, military command, intelligence and drug trafficking (Figure 4.3.b).

Figure 4.3.b. Topic prevalence for direct communications from the president.



Bypassing the president

Lest we conclude that topics here represent subjects matter, and not policy instruments, we can compare the topics that are frequently directed to Nixon to those that come from him. Milner and Tingley show that lobbyists will strategically "bypass" the White House on policy instruments with narrow, private-goods-style benefits, and save direct administration lobbying for those with broader distributional effects.[175] Figure 4.3.a provides evidence that administration officials operate in a similar fashion. Nearly all topics related to foreign aid or trade policy fall are infrequently directed at the president (i.e. below the zero line). Topics with no effect or with greater prevalence include policy instruments such as the strategic (nuclear) triad or NATO, which imply more general costs and benefits. We know, however, this is not just because foreign economic topics do not appear on the president's agenda: several topics in foreign economic policy that are infrequently directed to Nixon, frequently originate with him (Fig. 4.3.b).

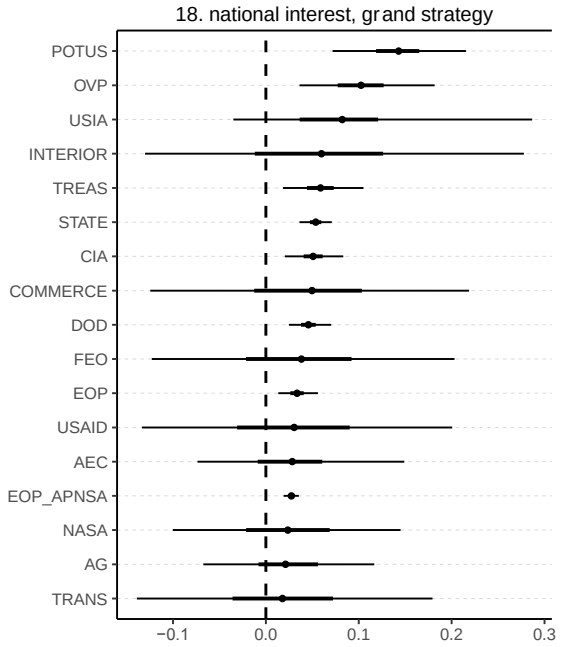
[175] Milner and Tingley, *Sailing the Water's Edge,* 77-120.

National interest and grand strategy

Another policy-related topic is shown in Figure 4.4. Here we see the topic associated with national interest, historical analogy and grand strategy (18). It is most frequently associated, first with the president and vice-president, and executive agencies thereafter. Such 'elevated' language is common in public statements and speeches; three texts most associated with this topic are Nixon's January 22, 1970 State of the Union Address, in which he renewed committed to a "just peace" in Vietnam;[176] his 1974 address to U.S. Naval Academy graduates; and a February 25, 1971 radio address that reiterated the *Nixon Doctrine*, principles of which he laid out informal remarks in Guam in July 1969.[177]

This topic is associated with the U.S. Information Service (USIA), suggesting that public agency's diplomacy mission is consistent with the President's public messaging. More importantly, it is associated with agencies that lack such a messaging role (CIA, Defense, the Federal Energy Organization or the EOP). In other words, this topic is not strictly rhetorical, but references concepts or doctrinal claims underlying policy deliberations.

Figure 4.4. Agency of origin and topic prevalence, national interest, grand strategy (with 50% and 95% CIs).



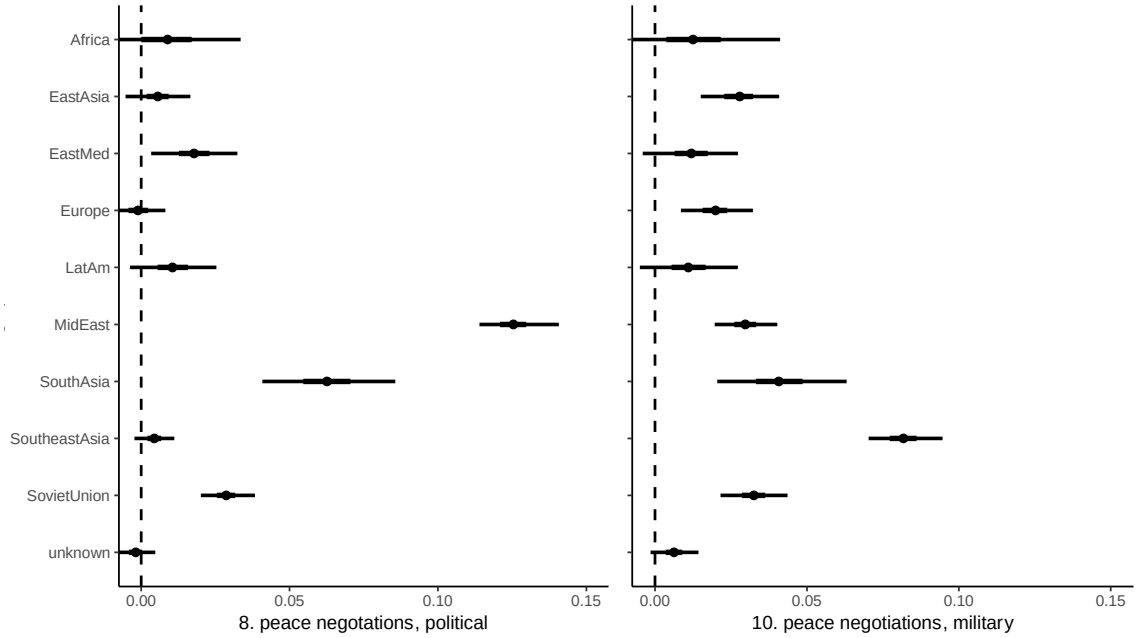
[176] Robert B. Semple Jr., "Nixon, Stressing Quality of Life, Asks in State of Union Message for Battle to Save Environment," *The New York Times* (New York), Jan. 23, 1970.

[177] Kimball, "The Nixon Doctrine: A Saga of Misunderstanding."

Policy instruments and geography

Figure 4.5 shows the effect of geographical focus on topic prevalence for two topics related to negotiation policies (8 and 10). Both are prevalent in regions where the U.S. played an active peacemaking or negotiating role: East Asia (the Korean peninsula), the Middle East, South Asia (the 1971 succession of Bangladesh), Vietnam, and the U.S.S.R. (SALT I/II). We see that military instruments are more prevalent where the U.S. was actively involved in a dispute (SE Asia/Vietnam) or working on military withdrawal plans (South Korea[178]). Meanwhile, political elements are much more prevalent in negotiations where the U.S. has little direct military presence (the Arab-Israeli conflict). During the South Asian crisis of 1971, Nixon combined political efforts with military signaling (positioning the *U.S.S. Enterprise* carrier group off of Sri Lanka). The multi-dimensional use of policy instruments by the Nixon administration is captured in South Asia's effect over both topics.

Figure 4.5. Military and political elements in peace settlement and negotiation, by region (with 50% and 95% CIs).



Policy instruments and agency of origin

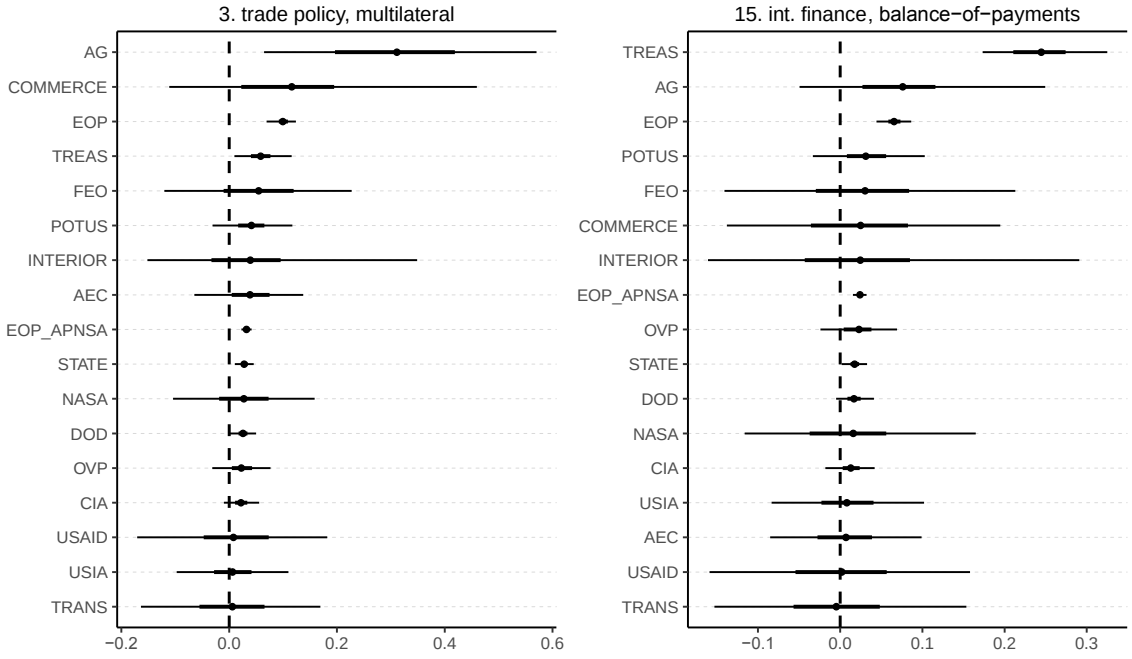
To assess the impact of agency on topic prevalence, a categorical variable for agency was included in our estimation. In Figure 4.6.a, we see how the agency covariate helps represent an organizational "division of labor" on policy instruments related to international trade and finance (topics 3 and 15). Prevalence for multilateral trade is

[178] As a reflection of changed priorities under the "Nixon Doctrine," the U.S. withdrew the 7th Infantry Division from South Korea in 1971.

highest for the Agriculture, Commerce and Treasury departments, suggesting this specifically concerns the GATT policy framework. Predictably, Treasury is the most important agency for international financial policy, given the evolving Bretton Woods crisis in the Nixon years. The persistent importance of the Agriculture Department is likely related to the early entangling of convertibility policy with a temporary import surcharge.[179]

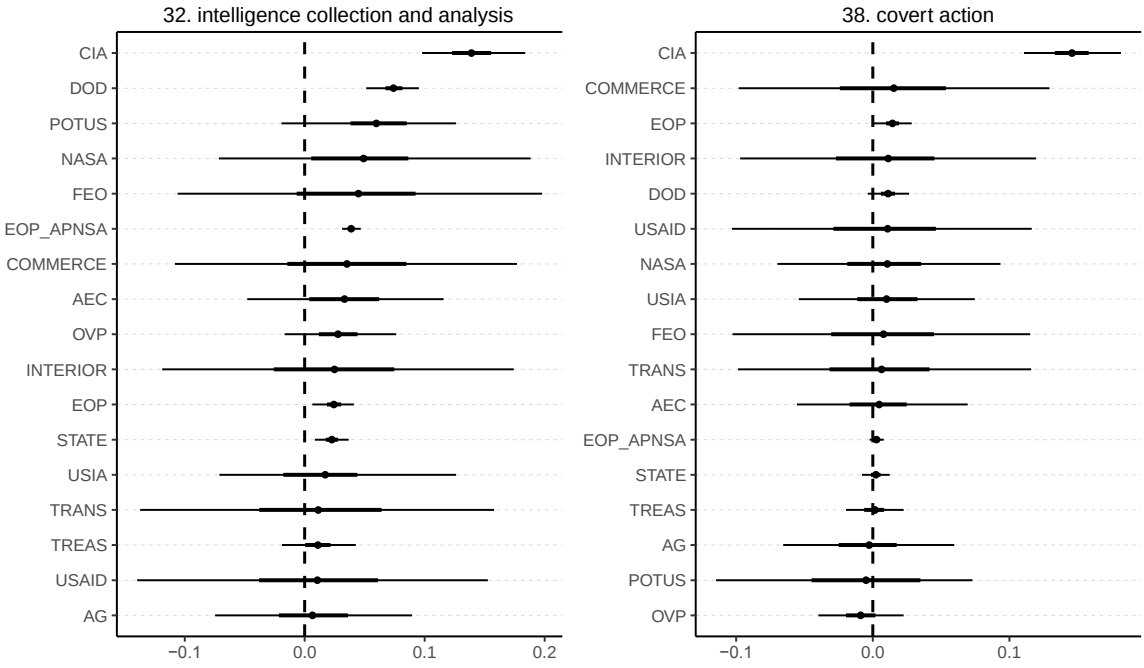
Figure 4.6.b shows agency distributions for two topics on intelligence (32 and 38). On the left we see collection and analysis centered on agencies' technical capabilities, with overt participation of Nixon himself. By contrast, covert action (right) is the exclusive province of CIA and – perhaps nonsensically – has almost no discernible association with the president or National Security Advisor. This latter finding is almost certainly the result of continued security classification across the corpus.[180]

Figure 4.6.a. Agency of origin, prevalence of topics related to trade and international financial policy (with 50% and 95% CIs).



[179] Douglas A. Irwin, "The Nixon shock after forty years: the import surcharge revisited," *World Trade Review* 12, no. 1 (2013).
[180] Joshua Botts, "FRUS at 150: The Evolution of the Foreign Relations Series" (11th International Conference of Editors of Diplomatic Documents, September 20, 2011).

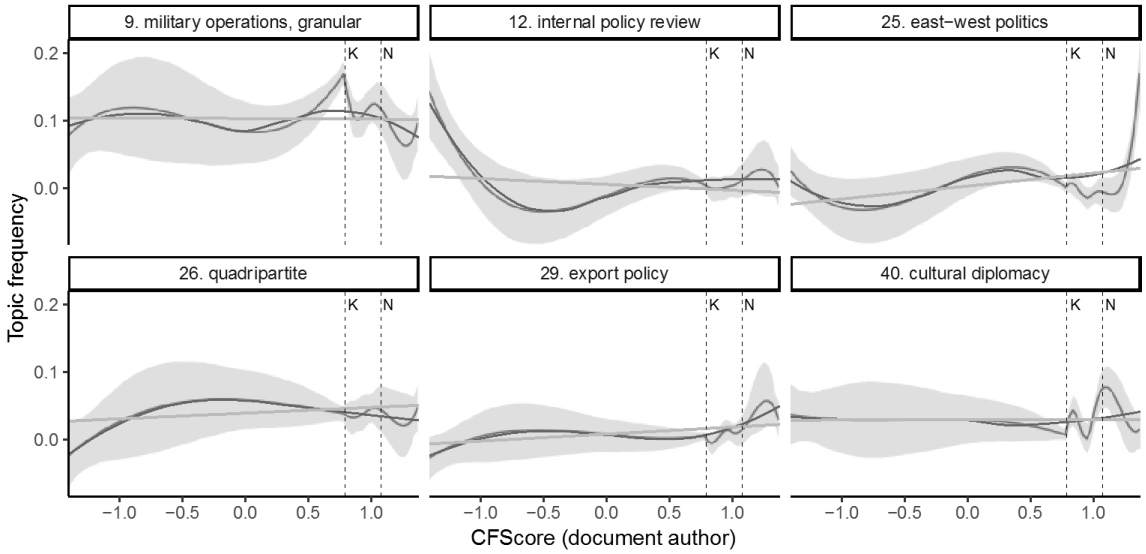
Figure 4.6.b. Agency of origin, prevalence of topics related to intelligence policy.



Left-right ideology has little effect on single topics or policy instruments

Thus far we have seen the interaction between document covariates and the appearance of solitary topics related to policy instruments. To understand officials' underlying preferences, however, we need to move to a multinomial distribution over such topics for each one. Before we do, however, we summarize the effects of our last covariate, author CFScore, on topic prevalence. While ideology showed little overall significance, Figure 4.7 presents regression results for six topics where it did. It shows a complex, but ultimately inconclusive relationship with topic prevalence. Most noticeably, the region on the x-axis associated with Kissinger and Nixon (the dashed vertical guidelines) tends to "warp" topic prevalence – the consequence of their individual priorities and outsize presence in the corpus. A few topics referring to issue-area, like the European theater, have positive trend-lines, with conservatives somewhat more likely to author texts in which they appear. In general, however, the marginal effect of ideology is zero or nearly zero in all cases.

Figure 4.7. Author ideology and topic prevalence for select topics. Relationships are summarized with loess curves (thick curve) and trend lines (in grey).



This non-effect of left-rights ideology supports our claim that estimated topics encode policy instruments, and do not simply reflect subject matter. Ideology, structured belief or preferenceship can be no more captured in a solitary topic than inferred from an individual's commitment to a single policy instrument. An official who pushes for military intervention in one context, for instance, can turn and advocate for foreign aid in another. A hawk may advocate more often for the former, and a dove may push for military action only under an extraordinary *casus belli*. For both, underlying belief relates to the relative frequency that one policy instruments appear – in other words, each one's distribution over policy-related topics.

IV. Distance from the president

The are several possible ways to summarize each official's relative commitment to policy instruments. One possibility is to exclude all non-policy topics from each official, constrain the remaining topics (such that they sum to one) and average over the resulting multinomial distributions. This assumes that the frequency with which each official discusses a policy implies a commitment to it. What this would leave out, however, is the possibility that *not* discussing a policy instrument contains worthwhile information. Given this, it might be better to include non-policy topics as well, either as they are already estimated, or combined into a single catch-call category.

For simplicity's sake (and at some risk of muddying the inferential power of results) we have left our multinomial distributions as they are, and taken the average over the documents in each official's subset. This generates a representative document for that official. We then assess the probabilistic dissimilarity or 'distance' from the President's representative (average) document and each official's representative (average) document. Here we use a discrete-probability Hellinger distance, given by

$$d_H(\mathbf{p}, \mathbf{q}) = d_H(\mathbf{q}, \mathbf{p}) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^{T} (\sqrt{p_i} - \sqrt{q_i})^2} \quad (4.5)$$

where T is our number of estimated topics. The factor of the square root of two normalizes its range to [0,1]. A score of 1 means that one distribution assigns probability 1 to an outcome or outcomes for which the other distribution assigns a probability of 0. In words, a document produced with absolute certainty by one representative distribution (the official's policy semantics) will with absolute certainty not be produced by the other. Hellinger distance is related to the geometrically-inspired Euclidean distance, as well as information-based metrics such as the (symmetrized) Kullback-Liebler divergence and Jensen-Shannon distance.[181]

Figure 4.8 reports Hellinger mean distances with confidence intervals, bootstrapped over the subset of documents for each official. I have limited measurements to officials with five or more documents in the corpus. Inset is a plot showing a slightly positive (but statistically insignificant) relationship between official ideology and the Hellinger distances obtained.

"Nixinger" and topic concentration

Kissinger (and deputy Scowcroft) are the closest to the president. This is consistent with the "Nixinger"-style depictions of foreign policy during this period, which stress the close (at times fraught) relationship between Nixon and his closest lieutenant. The next closest officials are mostly executive-department heads. This may stem in part from the degree to which they share responsibilities with the president, including both public messaging and broad policy assessments.

A related explanation is that texts produced by these figures broach *many topics*, while individuals farther away from the president focus on fewer ones. To assess this we measured each individual's *topic concentration* using the Herfindahl-Hirschman index (HHI), commonly used to measure market concentration, ethnic fractionalization, and (in applications to LDA) topic breadth.[182] Topic concentration does in fact correlate, albeit moderately, with the Hellinger distance ($r = 0.63$).

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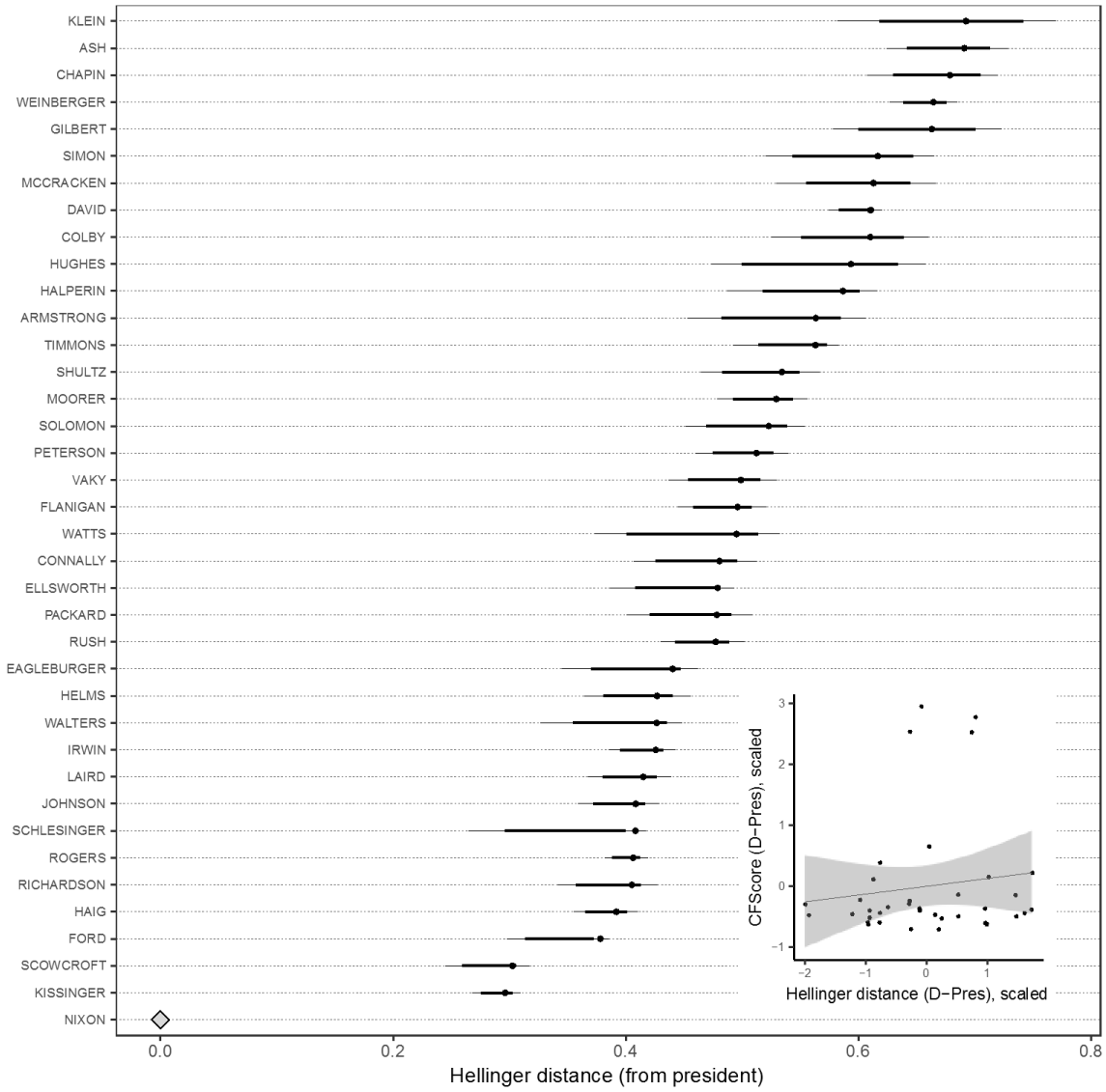
[181] Alison L. Gibbs and Francis Edward Su, "On Choosing and Bounding Probability Metrics," *International Statistical Review* 70, no. 3 (2002).

[182] We first assumed that each document was "about" one main topic, defined as its highest-frequency topic. We then calculated percentages (the share of the official's subset of document) represented by each main topic. The HHI for official k is the sum over the squares of each of her main-topic percentages:

$$HHI_k = \sum_{i=1}^{T_k} {s_{ki}}^2 \quad (4.6)$$

Where T_k is the number of main topics represented in each official's subset of documents. H will thus be higher when documents involve around fewer main topics.

Figure 4.8. Distance between average topic distributions for the president and officials in the Nixon corpus (with 80% and 95% CIs). Limited to officials with five or more texts. Inset plot shows no significant relationship between ideological (CFScore) distance from the president and Hellinger distance (axes are scaled for comparison).



Putting policy substance to probabilistic distance

The distances in Figure 4.8 give intuitive results. Particularly meaningful is the closeness of Kissinger to Nixon: more than any other figure, Kissinger is most likely to commit to policy instruments at frequencies that are similar to the President. As expected, we see

that left-right ideology does not strongly predict an official's closeness to Nixon over all choices.

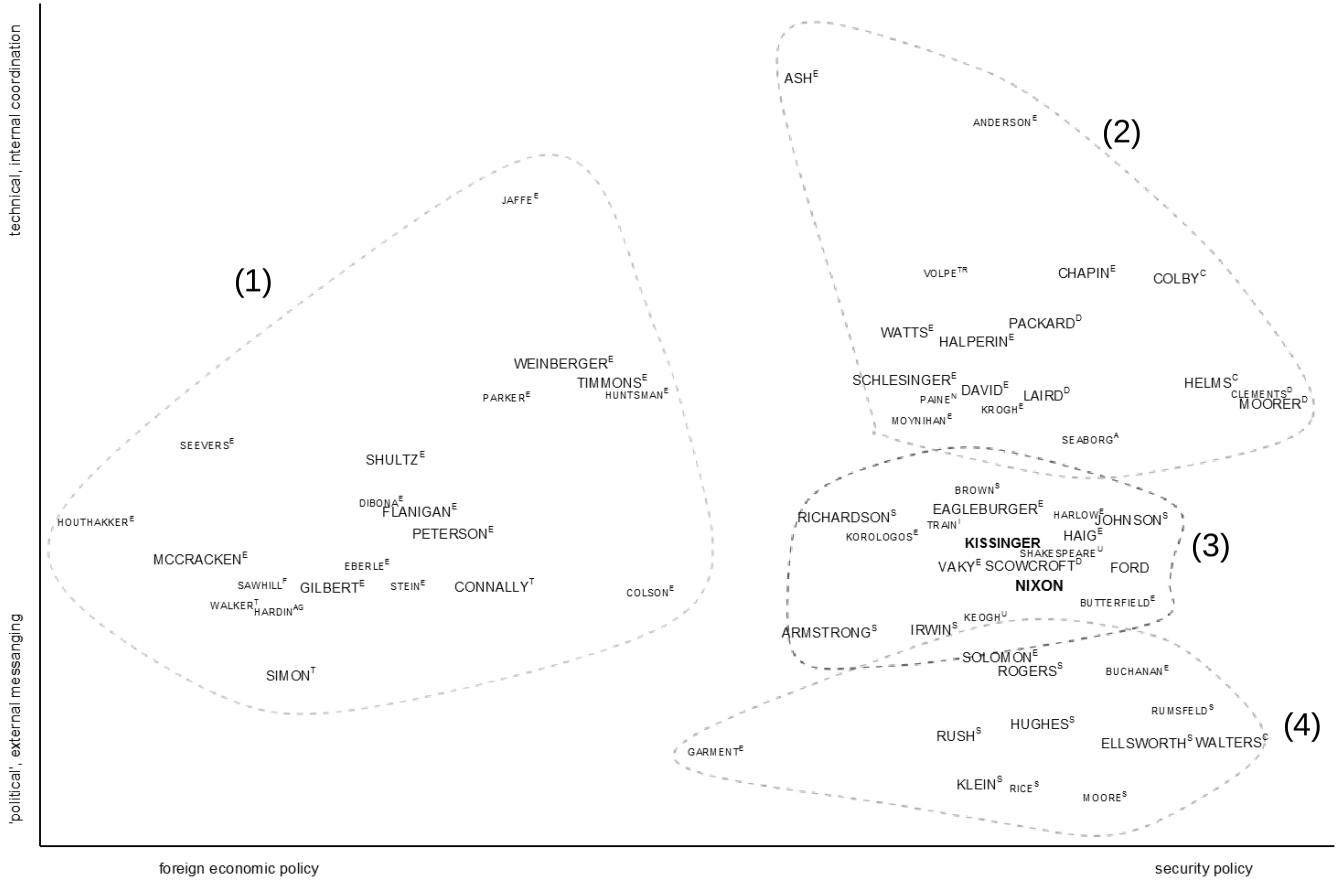
Despite this, it is difficult to interpret these distances in *substantive* policy terms.[183] A useful way to clarify the relationship between distance and policy is to take distance measures between *all of the officials*, including the President, and examine the resulting matrix for patterns suggestive of policy domain, instruments or priorities. To do this we use a multidimensional scaling algorithm.[184] Multidimensional scaling maps a matrix of pairwise values onto a n-dimensional (usually two-dimensional) Cartesian space, preserving the relationship between the points. Figure 4.9 shows a classic multidimensional scaling of the Hellinger distance matrix for all officials in the Nixon corpus.

The challenge of multidimensional scaling is to interpret the resulting axes or principal components. To assist in interpretation of these axes and to provide a rough estimate of distance from the president, we used a simple k-means clustering algorithm on the results. The meaning of the horizontal dimension in Figure 4.9 appears clear. A cluster of officials on the left-hand side of our graph are mostly Treasury (Simon and Connally), OSRTN (Gilbert, Eberle), OMB (Shultz) and EOP officials tasked with economic policy (Flanigan of the CIEP; McCracken of the CEA). On the right we see mostly officials from State, CIA (Helms, Colby), Defense (Packard, Laird, Moorer),

[183] Ideology scores on a one-dimension spectrum (DW-Nominate or CFScores, e..g.) are defined in terms that we largely understand – "liberal" and "conservative" – and there are only two scores that are equidistant from any other point, one more liberal than the reference point and one more conservative. The Hellinger distances, by contrast, are measured in 41-dimensional space, and an unlimited number of distributions can produce the same measure of dissimilarity.

[184] Grimmer, *Representational Style*.

Figure 4.9. Going from probabilistic distance to policy substance. Here we see the relationships between officials, including the president, Kissinger and Ford. To help with interpretation, officials are clustered, with superscripts added to show their agency affiliation (A = AEC, AG = AG, C = CIA, CO = COMMERCE, D = DOD, E= EOP, F= FEO, I = INTERIOR, N= NASA, S = STATE, TR = TRANS, T = TREAS, US = USAID, U = USIA). Officials with a small number of texts in the corpus ($n < 5$) contribute less to our interpretation of each cluster and are greyed-out.



USIA (Shakespeare, Keogh) and the NSC. The x-axis divides largely on the basis of policy instruments – separating foreign economic policy from the domain of security policy. It also loosely coincides with the dichotomy between cooperative and militant internationalism.

The second dimension presents a greater challenge to interpretation. A clue is that officials closer to the x-axis are typically involved in the either publicity (Nixon's Communications Director Herb Klein), have a significant public messaging role (Treasury Secretary Simon), or are involved in diplomacy (the State department officials in the orange cluster). Officials in the top half of the graph are mostly occupied with technical details related to military action and intelligence, budgetary details and staff coordination. As an example, the text subset of OMB head Roy Ash, the uppermost official, comprises details related almost exclusively to agency budget and reorganization.

We might interpret the y-dimension as dividing 'softer' discussions largely on policy's political and multilateral dimensions – responses from foreign leaders, diplomacy and reputational consequences, from 'harder,' technical or scientific discussions related to measurement, implementation, and internal coordination.[185] We see that defense officials – secretaries, DCIs and NSC staffers, e.g. – are situated halfway between external concerns (i.e. foreign actors and powers) and the coordination of technical and agency resources. Nixon's position on the graph lends credence to this interpretation: We see Nixon prioritizes security instruments here (i.e. sits on the graph's right side), and while he shares concerns with technical or operational details, he also appears more involved in political messaging than those situated above him.

Does distance from the president affect survivability?

The clusters in Figure 5.9 capture cohorts of advisors and officials that are closest to a local cluster mean. The "presidential" cluster (3) comprises personal counselors, assistants and others who generally share Nixon's focus on security policy, including a significant number who served on the NSC. We may interpret this as an 'operations' cluster in the organizational sense, of those who work closely with the president (and each other) to articulate priorities, shape messaging and guide policy development, and whose topical signatures are closest to the president.

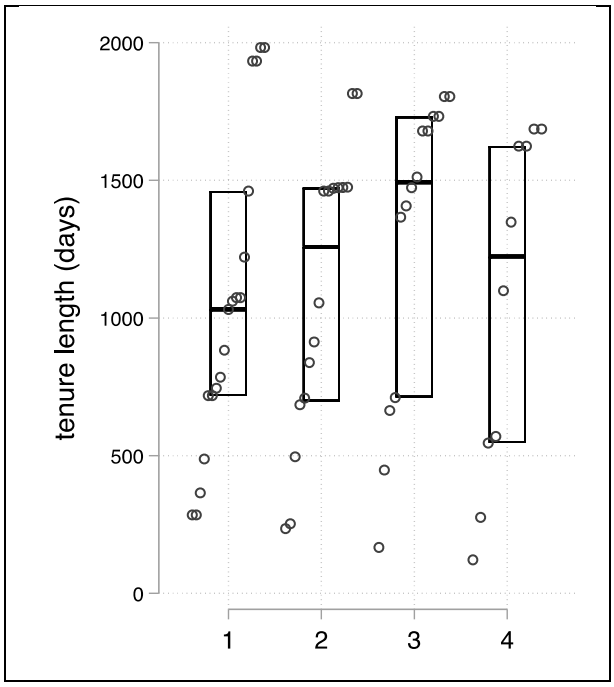
Thus being 'far away' from Nixon means being located in the three other 'functional' or specialized clusters: The "economic policy" (1) cluster contains treasury, OSRTN, OMB, CEA and other officials responsible for developing foreign economic

[185] The distinction between hard (quantifiable) and soft (non-quantifiable) information first comes from accounting theory. Its implications have been explored in game theory (strategic communications), accounting, business administration, and microeconomic organizational analyses. See Bertomeu and Marinovic, "Hard and Soft Information."; José María Liberti and Mitchell A Petersen, "Information: Hard and Soft," *The Review of Corporate Finance Studies* 8, no. 1 (2018); Ricardo Alonso, Wouter Dessein, and Niko Matouschek, "When Does Coordination Require Centralization?," *American Economic Review* 98, no. 1 (2008).

policy. The "security" (2) cluster contains various figures from Defense, the national space program, the intelligence community and the NSC. Finally, the "diplomatic" (4) cluster, at lower-right, sits at the intersection of external political concerns and security policy, and is mostly constituted by State Department officials.

While findings are not statistically significant, Figure 4.10 shows that were are noticeable differences in the tenure length for officials in the clusters we have identified. As we might expect, official tenure is greatest in the presidential cluster (3), where alignment with Nixon is greatest.

Figure 4.10. Tenure length in days by cluster. Censored observations omitted. X-axis gives the cluster. 1 = economic policy; 2 = security policy; 3 = "presidential" cluster; 4 = diplomatic policy



Survival and 'tracking' the president

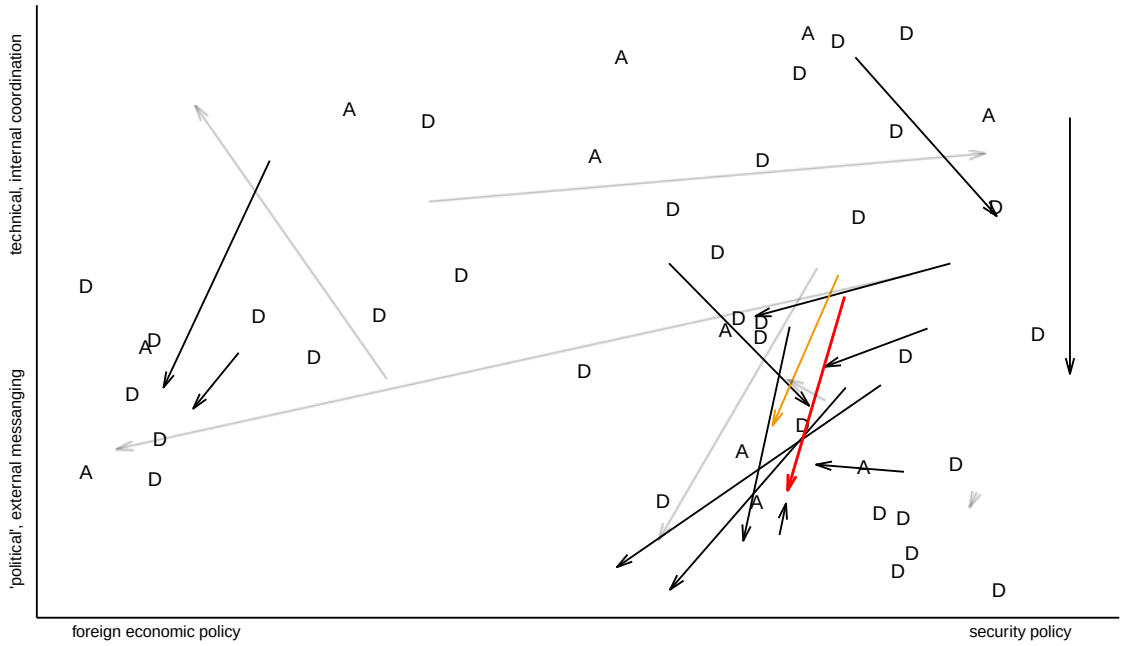
Measuring officials' distances across the two terms of the Nixon administration (Figure 4.11) provides additional validation of these findings. If we accept that our x-axis refers to policy domain, we should expect officials to be largely confined or constrained to it. In other words, we should not expect to see officials move laterally, from economic policy to security policy (or vice versa) over time.

We have interpreted our y-axis as measuring how technical, hard-information-driven and politically neutral an official's policy semantics are. Although it is theoretically possible for officials to pivot from more technical policy deliberations to less technical ones – to go from a data-driven discussion of military posture or spending to a focus on its diplomatic or political implications, e.g. – it is less likely that an official who starts in a "softer" policy space can rise to the technical side. In other words,

whatever vertical adjustments we see among our officials in our policy space, *should be largely downward and not up*.

Figure 4.11 shows the positions of officials in our policy space for the first and the second Nixon terms. We see little lateral movement, across policy domains, and significant downward migration, including by the president (the red arrow) and Kissinger (orange). Both are consistent with our axis interpretations. Of the two large lateral movements that break the expected pattern, the right-to-left swing represents an official with fewer than five texts in the corpus (CEA Chairman Herbert Stein); the other, traversing from left to right, represents a change of official position (James Scheslinger, who left the Atomic Energy Commission to become Director of Central Intelligence in early 1973).

Figure 4.11. Relative positions across presidential terms. Here the multidimensional scaling algorithm (from Figure 5.9) was used to produce two additional spatial interpretations, for Nixon's first and second terms (1969-1972 and 1973-1974, respectively). Officials who left during the first term are marked with "D", while those who arrived during the second term are marked with "A." Arrows show movement for officials who serve both terms. Nixon's movement is shown in red, Kissinger's in orange; officials with a small number of texts in the corpus ($n < 10$) are greyed-out.



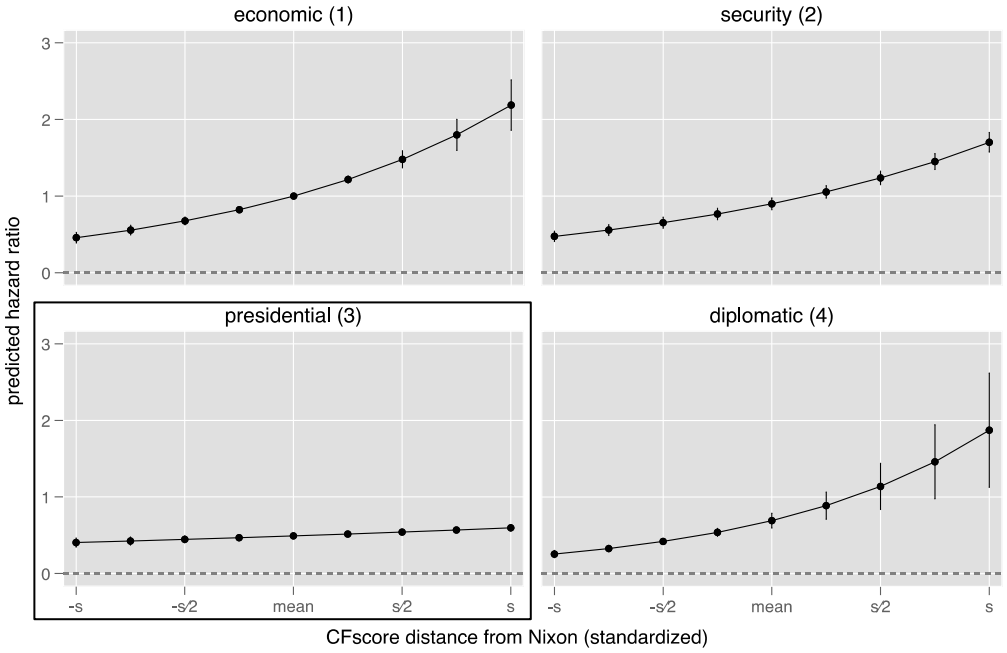
Most importantly, we see clear *politicization effects*. Officials who appear most likely to survive from one term to another are those who enter the administration at closer to proximity to the president. Moreover, as we can see by the movement of the arrows from Nixon's first term to his second, there is a tendency for such long-tenured officials to "track" the president, either converging or moving in parallel with him.

Alignment on policy instruments and policy-constrained ideology

These provide substantial evidence that distance from the president, measuring choices over policy instruments, can affect official or advisor survival. The literature on ideology in foreign policy, suggests that ideology can still play a role in policy, although it may be constrained or conditioned by policy area, or a policy's distributional effects.

To assess the importance of left-right ideology by policy domain, and to test whether alignment on policy instruments (cluster membership) moderates the effect of ideological distance, we performed a simplified Cox regression, interacting our ideological distance from the president ($Dist_{Pres}$) on our clusters. Predicted hazard ratios are given in Figure 4.12.

Figure 4.12. Margins showing effects of ideology on official survival by policy cluster (with 95% CIs). Cox regression interacted standardized $Dist_{Pres}$ on policy cluster; model was estimated with robust clustered SEs, adjusted for policy cluster.



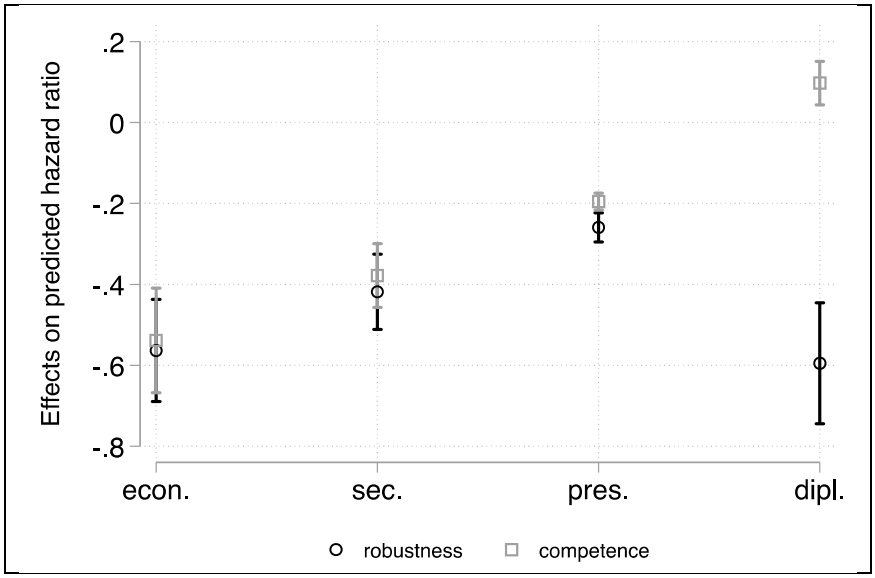
Findings shown in Figure 4.12 are consistent with the formulation of ideology as policy-constrained. Policy area (captured by cluster membership) interacts with ideology in significant ways. Importantly, we see that for the economic policy cluster (1), left-right ideological distance from the president significantly affects survival, while the effect is (somewhat) weaker for security (2) and diplomatic policy (4). This supports Milner and Tingley's claim that dispute over economic policies operate more along conventional (left-right) lines than other policy areas. In general, we see that proximity to the president, measured over topic distributions, substantially weakens the role of ideology for the survival of foreign policy officials. Alignment on appropriate policy instruments, in other words, provides a substantial *buffer* for foreign-policy officials who may be ideologically different from the president.

Robustness and competence insulate misaligned officials

In chapter 2 we found that access to informational resources – that is, the robustness of an agency – exacerbated the politicization effect in domestic policy. Nixon was more apt to retain ideological-aligned officials when they possessed greater informational resources, dismissing or marginalization non-conforming officials under the same conditions.

Among foreign policy officials, we see a contrary dynamic. Figure 4.13 shows the marginal effect of agency robustness by cluster. For all clustered officials, robustness or informational resources tends to protect them (the negative effect on the hazard ratio implies better survivability). However, it tends to preserve those officials who, located in the farther clusters, are *least* aligned with the president on policy.

Figure 4.13. Conditional marginal effects, agency competence and robustness by cluster. Simplified Cox regression, competence and robustness interacted separately on policy cluster. Robust clustered SEs were used, adjusted for policy cluster.



We have provided theoretical justification for this *insulation* effect (Chapter 3). Another possible explanation is that the president tends to have fewer informational resources herself in foreign policy (relative to domestic questions), and thus is much less likely to achieve a better policy outcomes by "going it alone." This places a higher premium on informational resources in foreign policy.

Our competence measure largely mirrors the effect of robustness with the exception of the diplomatic cluster. For that group of officials we see higher competence tends to hurt survivability. Considering the impact of ideology on officials within this group (Fig. 4.11) we can consider this the most politicized group of officials, although these factors do not result in tenures that are substantially different from the other non-presidential clusters (Fig. 4.10).

V. What we have found

This chapter uses a text-as-data methodology and a unique corpus – the *Foreign Relations of the United States* document set – to investigate patterns of politicization in foreign policy. There is substantial evidence that estimating a topic model on this corpus, generates topics that are largely representative of policy instruments. Moreover, we have shown that the frequency with which an individual official presses for the use of a policy instrument, or a combination of policy instruments, provides a useful alternative measure of distance from the president, or bias. The effect of that bias, and the persistence of left-right ideology in foreign policy, can be summarized in three claims.

1. Ideology can be powerful in foreign policy, but only under the right conditions

This chapter demonstrates two forms of politicization in Nixon foreign policy. First, in economic, diplomatic and security policy – where the choices of policy instruments are more limited or domain-specific, ideology continues to have a significant impact in whether or not an official or advisor remains in office. This form of politicization is policy-constrained – in a way similar to that found by Milner and Tingley. It is similar to the left-right politicization found in Nixon domestic policy in chapter 3, with one key difference: There we found that robustness – access to agency resources – powerfully strengthened the politicization effect. In foreign policy, the reverse is true. Access to agency resources tends to insulate misaligned officials.

Second, we found that left-right ideology is non-operative for officials and advisors who are the most closely aligned officials and advisors, those in what I have termed the 'presidential' cluster. These officials tend to track the president over the course of his administration, and for them, left-right ideology is in fact inconsequential.

2. Alignment on policy instruments can trump difference on ideology

The more dissimilar Nixon officials are in preference over policy instrument, the more ideologically aligned they must be to survive; on the other hand, relative proximity on policy instruments tends to soften the impact of ideological misalignment. This suggests that, while Nixon demanded policy loyalists (i.e. those conformed on specific issues policy) where differences on policy choice persisted, left-right ideology could serve as a substitute form of control.

3. Politicization is not just about ideology, although it generally is

Taken with our previous chapters, we see that Nixon used politicization as an important tool, with conformity leading to higher retention and longer tenure. In domestic policy, the effect of ideology is clear: Officials with greater access to private, policy-relevant information must be ideological aligned or else. In foreign policy the pattern is more complex. Conformity over policy instruments, which expresses a different kind of underlying belief, can be more important than left-right ideology.

Does this mean that Nixon ultimately defied "labels" in foreign policy, as he himself suggested? As we have seen, the answer is yes, and no. Did Nixon politicize

foreign policy less than domestic policy? Was the perspective of the "whole-worlder" unconventional or non-ideological enough, to admit or tolerate a broader set of belief among his officials and advisors? The evidence suggests no. Politicization was very much a feature of both domestic and foreign-policy development. If we miss it in the latter, it is not because it is not there. It is because dynamics of politicization in foreign affairs can hide in the more complex relationship between ideology and policymaking.

Conclusion: Nixon, crucial and constrained

This dissertation has demonstrated throughout that ideological affinity – calculated using CFScores and distance from the president – is an important determinant of tenure-length for officials and advisors under Nixon. It is a feature of both domestic and foreign policy. This is consistent with "what we know" collectively about the Nixon administration, and supports treating the Nixon administration as a crucial case.

Where is politicization not happening?

Such a crucial case of politicization has general relevance when we have evidence of non-politicization. That politicization does not happen, despite amply demonstrated pressures for it, strengthens our conclusions about its general causes and the factors that constrain it. With that in mind, where do we see politicization *not* taking place? In the area of domestic policy, pressures on officials and advisors for conformity are strongest when agencies are most robust – that is, when they have greatest access to private, policy-relevant information. Domestic coordinating bodies or agencies, such as the Domestic Council, the Council on Economic Policy, the Council on Environmental Quality, among them, are much less subject to such pressures.

These findings provide a partial answer to a central question in presidential studies, one largely unanswered since Moe's "The Politicized Presidency": the relationship between centralization and politicization. They suggest that *centralization*, efforts to locate decision making within the EOP or in close proximity to the president, does not function in an organic partnership with politicization. Where centralization takes place, politicization does not follow. This is largely because such non-robust bodies do not produce policy-relevant information themselves, and therefore do not convey informational advantage on officials who then must be "managed" using ideological criteria. We must use caution here, however. When we say coordinating agencies are less prone to politicization, we mean among *officials or advisors who serve only within those bodies*. Coordinating agencies comprise more than just single-role officials; the most powerful figures in such bodies are those from outside the coordinating agency, officials and advisors who come from robust executive, independent, or EOP agencies, and these *are* heavily politicized.

In the domain of foreign policy, we have seen that politicization on conventional ideological lines tends only to occur where officials differ from the president over policy instruments. Where they do not differ, ideological conforming is less apparent. We should issue a second word of caution here. Where officials and advisors are "closer" to the president, as measured by their distribution over preferred policy instruments, such closeness replaces left-right ideology as the basis for politicization. At base, this may be a distinction without a difference: presidential control is *still control*, whether exerted through ideological conforming or alignment on specific policy. Yet we may conclude that conventional politicization – the left-right ideological kind – was most often deployed when officials served at a "remove," in terms of access to information or policy preferences. It is a vitally important, albeit condition-contingent, form of presidential control.

Institutions are important; organizations less so

That politicization is contingent strengthens a more general claim, made in this study, about the vital role institutions play, in understanding expertise, presidential behavior and the control strategies that shape the modern presidency. Institutions are central to this analysis in two ways. First, taking the importance of professional experience, of matching career to agency competence, and policy bias to agency robustness, leads us to a vision of 'expertise' that is practical and institutionally-focused. This is an open challenge to analyses that treat official or advisor expertise as given or exogenous (like many strategic information models) or as an individual endowment (like many practitioner accounts, histories and managerial analyses). Second, while general agency characteristics – of robustness, specialization and competence – are important, specific organizational factors are not. Neither cabinet status nor having a position subject to Senate approval impacts survival. Cuts to agency budgets, or serving in agencies that are either president-created or subjected to presidential reorganization, have no measurable effect. In light of this, the conventional focus on advisory structure and specific organizational characteristics – a common feature of managerial studies – may be misguided.

Why do general institutional measures perform well while specific organizational measures do not? A tremendous amount of energy has been put into proposing or enacting organizational redesigns in the modern presidency. Advisory-system analyses, aspirations to cabinet government, post-hoc assessments like the Brownlow or Murphy Commission Reports, or the top-to-bottom redesigns that gave us Eisenhower's policy hill or Kennedy's working groups approach – these all share a faith that the right organizational design will solve the problems faced by modern presidents. Practitioner accounts, managerial studies, and our findings here, however, suggest that interactions between a president and her advisors and officials are not readily constrained by organizational design. They tend to occur in a more fluid, open market-like exchange space. In such a space it is not where you sit but what you can "carry with you" that matters. Most important is the private, policy-relevant information that flows from the institutional building blocks of the executive branch.

Limitations of this study and future directions

The most obvious limitation of this study is that it is one study of a single presidency. While I have argued that because of its peculiarities the Nixon case can teach us important general lessons about politicization, using one case nonetheless creates obvious blind spots. Some of our findings may be data artifacts, for example, which may or may not be confirmed using a larger sample across administrations. And we are circumscribed in what we can say; for instance, we cannot tell whether the dynamics of politicization vary by exogenous conditions, such as the party of the president, the party or ideological composition of Congress or, in foreign policy, level of military commitment or costs, or the broader strategic environment. These and other important questions call for a richer set of data.

This study differs from other studies of politicization by focusing on retention and not appointment of officials. Retention, understood through tenure data, captures an

important and often neglected dimension of *substitution* as a method of politicization. But substitution does not exhaust the ways presidents may politicize. Other possible strategies are *engagement*, including the promotion of officials on the basis of party, or the allocation of presidential attention to loyalists or favored agencies. And politicization may be achieved through *debate control*, limiting the semantic content of policy discussions to presidential, party or ideological priorities. These last strategies can prove more empirically elusive than either appointment or retention, since they require even more granular, individual-level measurements that are costly to collect at scale. In the Chapter 4, we see what may be a possible work-around – using text-as-data techniques to measure politicization over policy instruments. Such computational methods hold promise as ways to examine these other, less-studied techniques of presidential politicization, and open possible avenues for future research.

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Appendix A: Sources for tenure data (partial bibliography)

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Appendix B: Agency measures used for Nixon officials and advisors

Shown here is agency size, plus our core theoretical variables used for the analysis in Chapters 3 and 4. Included are policy scope (whether the agency is specialized), policy domain (whether it is responsible for foreign policy), and robustness and competence measures.

	Size*	Spec?	F.P.?	Robust.	Comp.
Executive/cabinet Departments:					
Department of Agriculture	111,285			0.9939	0.8279
Department of Commerce	34,260			0.9915	0.6289
Department of Defense	1,030,965		✓	0.9998	0.5628
Department of Justice	47,214			0.9924	0.2717
Department of Health, Education and Welfare	125,152			0.9982	0.6982
Department of Housing and Urban Development	17,950			0.9925	0.6618
Department of the Interior	71,414			0.9974	0.596
Department of Labor	34,260			0.9972	0.6421
Office of the Special Trade Representative (OSRTN)	41	✓	✓	0.8537	0.5
Office of the Vice President (SAP-OVP)	29			0.6897	0.4444
Department of State	34,421		✓	0.9852	0.5725
Department of Transportation	69,757			0.9978	0.5817
Department of the Treasury	106,555			0.9992	0.4023
United States Information Agency (USIA)	9,195		✓	0.9979	0.4737
United States Postal Service	682,120			0.9973	0.951
Department of Veterans Affairs	194,362			0.9999	0.3529
Other EOP/independent agencies:					
Council of Economic Advisors (CEA)	53	✓		0.4906	0.7407
Council on Economic Policy (CEP)†	36		✓	0.8333	0.5
Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ)	70			0.5571	0.7742
Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)‡	–		✓	0.9773	0.5628
Council on International Economic Policy (CIEP)	36		✓	0.8333	0.5
Domestic Council (DC)	55			0.6	0.7727
Federal Energy Office (FEO)	3,585		✓	0.9869	0.4043
Federal Property Council (FPC)	1,251	✓		0.9664	0.7619
National Aeronautics and Space Council (NASC)	70	✓	✓	0.7714	0.75
National Council of Marine Resources and Engineering (NCMRED)	29		✓	0	0.7241
National Security Council (NSC)	82		✓	0.2439	0.9839
Office of Consumer Affairs (OCA)	51	✓		0.7647	0.8333
Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO)	1,636			0.9364	0.7019
Office of Emergency Preparedness (OEP)	475		✓	0.9747	0.3846
Office of Management and Budget (OMB)	637	✓		0.9655	0.8182
Office of Science and Technology (OST)	70		✓	0.7	0.8571
Office of Telecommunciations Policy (OTP)	70	✓	✓	0.8	0.8667
Special Action Office for Drug Abuse Prevention (SAODAP)	133	✓		0.9098	0.75
White House Office (WHO)	542	✓		0.952	0.0769

* Size taken from 1972, or from first year data was available (e.g. CIEP in 1976).
† Data not available. Used data from the Council on International Economic Policy (CIEP)
‡ Data on size not available; estimated size from various sources. For the sake of computing robustness and competence, number of policy-determining positions and 'political' positions taken from the Department of Defense. CIA is sometimes considered a cabinet-level position; during the Nixon years it was not.